



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
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45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

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Thursday, June 5, 2025

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 5, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)
[English]

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 40(1) of the Privacy Act and subsection 25(1) of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, the Privacy Commissioner's report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025).

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

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

He said: 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:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House:

(a) for the duration of the 45th Parliament,

(i) Standing Order 104(2) be amended by adding, after the words "10 members," the following: "which shall be composed of five members from the Liberal Party, four members from the Conservative Party and one member from the Bloc Québécois, except for the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which shall consist of nine

members and be composed of four members from the Liberal Party, four members from the Conservative Party and one member from the Bloc Québécois,

(ii) Standing Orders 104(5), 104(6)(b), 114(2)(e) and 114(2)(f) be suspended,

(iii) the Clerk of the House be authorized to make any required editorial and consequential alterations to the Standing Orders, including to the marginal notes;

(b) the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be appointed by the whip of each recognized party depositing with the Clerk of the House a list of their party's members of the said committee no later than 12 p.m. on Friday, June 6, 2025, to prepare and report lists of members to compose the standing and standing joint committees of the House, provided that,

(i) the Clerk of the House shall convene a meeting of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs no later than Tuesday, June 10, 2025,

(ii) immediately upon the presentation of the report referred to in paragraph (b), it shall be deemed concurred in; and

(c) on any day, at midnight or thereafter, if the House has not completed a series of recorded divisions related to the business of supply or on any bill, a minister of the Crown may move, at any time, the suspension of the sitting of the House, which shall be deemed adopted, and the sitting of the House shall be suspended until 9:00 a.m., later that calendar day.

● (1005)

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

There being no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

[English]

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

The motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent Kenora—Kiiwetinoong here in the 45th Parliament. I would like to table a petition related to medical assistance in dying.

Petitioners are calling on the government to protect all Canadians whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable, by prohibiting medical assistance in dying for those whose prognosis for natural death is more than six months.

Routine Proceedings

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the House regarding medical assistance in dying. It expresses concern about people who are vulnerable, those who have a disability, do not foresee imminent death, or have mental health issues, etc.

The petitioners are looking for the Government of Canada to protect Canadians whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable, by prohibiting medical assistance in dying for those whose prognosis for natural death is more than six months.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to present petitions in the House today.

The first petition comes from the last Parliament, but I think it is one that is still very much relevant. The petitioners point out that Canada made us all a promise, a promise that anyone from anywhere could do anything. They say that, after nine years, the promise of Canada has been broken, that we have seen a lot of promises broken. They say the promise to balance the budget was broken. The promise to reduce taxes on the middle class was broken. The promise to build more affordable housing was also broken.

Petitioners say that many hard-working Canadians who are 35 years old are living in their parents' basement. This never happened before the government came along with policies that have doubled housing costs. There are 1,800 homeless people in encampments across Ontario; this has never happened before. This is the type of thing we would see in third world countries. People are dying in these encampments. Gun violence is up 120%, yet we have a government that goes after hunters while letting criminals and gun smugglers go free.

The petitioners want to see a reduction in taxes so servers, truck drivers and plumbers can work more, earn more and earn powerful paycheques. For this to happen, people need a roof over their head. They say that Canada has fewer homes per capita than any other G7 country. There is too much red tape. We need to incentivize municipalities to speed up—

The Speaker: The chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the member is a very experienced member in presenting petitions, Mr. Speaker, and knows the rules. He knows that we should not be reading the entire petition but giving a quick summary of it. He is now on point four with respect to reading it. Hopefully you can encourage him to expedite the presentation.

The Speaker: Yes, we have a lot of work today, so we should be as speedy as possible.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I must confess that it has been a difficult six months for me not being in this place. I missed everyone, but especially the member for Kingston and the Islands.

An hon. member: The end of April was particularly difficult.

The Speaker: Order, please. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has the floor.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it was not difficult for me. I got two-thirds of the votes of my constituents, so I have a strong mandate to share—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the petitioners have observed, and I share their views without comment, that Canada has fewer homes per capita than any other G7 country, and that there is too much red tape. Just to generally summarize, they are suggesting that we incentivize municipalities to allow the construction of more homes. They also express concern about the need to cap population growth and about the out-of-control immigration system.

Further, the petitioners say that we need to fix the budget with a law that would require government to find one dollar of savings for every new dollar of spending. They say we must stop crime, not by banning hunting rifles but by being tough on criminals and strengthening the border.

The petitioners want the House to build more homes, fix the budget, stop the crime, reduce taxes—

● (1010)

The Speaker: This has gone on too long. I would ask the member to be brief.

ERITREA

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is with respect to the human rights situation in Eritrea. The petitioners note that Eritrea has been ruled by an authoritarian, brutal dictator, under a totalitarian system for the last 30 years, with no constitution, no elections, no parliament, no freedom of press or freedom of movement and association.

There are many different points made in the petition about the human rights situation in Eritrea; there are also concerns raised about foreign interference and the collaboration of the Eritrean government with the Putin regime.

The petitioners therefore call on the Government of Canada to engage Eritrean political and human rights activists and pro-democracy groups, to take a leading role among western allies to challenge the Eritrean dictator's malicious conspiracy with Vladimir Putin, to investigate foreign interference here in Canada, to strengthen sanctions against human rights abusers and to advocate for the release of all imprisoned journalists and imprisoned Eritrean parliamentarians.

PORNOGRAPHY

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling deals with a bill that was previously named Bill S-210 and has been reintroduced in this Parliament as Bill S-209.

The petitioners are calling for meaningful age verification for those accessing sexual material online. They note that the consumption of sexually explicit materials by young persons is associated with a range of serious harms, including the development of pornography addiction, the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, the development of attitudes favourable to harassment and violence, etc.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Okay, we get the point.

Garnett Genuis: The government House leader does not want to hear this, but it is an important petition. I hope he will take note of it and support this important bill.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to adopt Bill S-210, which is now Bill S-209, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling deals with euthanasia, or medical assistance in dying.

The petitioners are concerned that allowing medical assistance in dying for those with disabilities or chronic illness who are not dying devalues their lives and tacitly endorses the notion that life with disability is optional and, by extension, dispensable. They note in this petition that many disability advocates in Canada have expressed opposition to allowing MAID for people with disabilities.

The petitioners' ask to the House today is to protect all Canadians whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable by prohibiting medical assistance in dying for those whose prognosis for natural death is more than six months.

VENEZUELA

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling deals with the human rights situation in Venezuela, a situation that many members of Parliament have spoken about over the years.

The petitioners say that the current government is aware of crimes against humanity by the Venezuelan government and has created a family-based humanitarian program for Colombians, Haitians and Venezuelans suffering under current country conditions. The petitioners note that Canada was one of six countries that submitted Venezuela to the ICC, denouncing crimes against humanity as defined by the Rome Statute.

The petitioners note that several international organizations, including a Canadian NGO, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, led by former Canadian justice minister Irwin Cotler, have recognized the unjust incarcerations, torture, forced disappearances and political persecution—

• (1015)

The Speaker: I would remind members that while petitions are important, it might be useful to summarize the main points.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am doing my best to summarize. People have put a lot of work into a fairly lengthy petition on a very serious international human rights issue, and they were waiting throughout the government's—

Routine Proceedings

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North has a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, the member is intentionally abusing the rules. He knows full well that members are not supposed to be reading a petition. Every petition he has introduced, he has read. We are supposed to capture the essence of a petition, and the member knows full well that he is mocking the rules of the chamber.

It has been heckled across and has been brought to his attention. I would ask that he be called to order, give the essence of the petition and stop reading it. Other members in his own caucus want to present petitions.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the rules are, as I think the member knows but misstated, that members cannot read an entire petition. Members are to summarize the petition, and in the course of that, reading from prepared notes that one has that relate to the petition is perfectly allowed. Historically, there was a time when members could not read anything in the House of Commons—

The Speaker: Summarizing can also mean making things succinct. I note that there is limited time for petitions and that other members would also like to present petitions.

I would ask the member to conclude as quickly as possible.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I challenge the member on the other side of the House who raised the point of order. Frankly, I gave a 30-second summation of a petition two days ago, and he stood up and interrupted that one because he did not want to hear it at that point in time either. If he does not want to hear summations of petitions, then let the summation be what—

The Speaker: I was not made aware of such an interruption.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I will finish summarizing this one, and I am almost done. I know that we do have limited time here, and there are a number of other members who will table petitions.

The petitioners note that at least three of 257 political prisoners have close family members here in Canada.

The petitioners call on the government to advocate for the release of political prisoners in Venezuela with close ties to Canada. In particular, they mention the following names: Ígbert José Marín Chapparro and Oswaldo Valentín García Palomo.

An hon. member: Point of order.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am reading the names of political prisoners. I did not have them memorized. Can I read off the page?

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

Routine Proceedings

I am reading directly from the Standing Orders, the House of Commons rules, in particular Standing Order 36, which says that members are not permitted to make speeches when presenting petitions and may not read the text of the petition into the record.

The member has now done it on four petitions. It is your duty, Mr. Speaker, to bring him to order and to encourage him to observe the rules. If he does not do that, it is your responsibility to take the next steps as necessary.

The Speaker: I assume there are not many names to read. I think it is important to read the names in this case, but I would implore the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to summarize and conclude.

The member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola is rising on a point of order.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, it is not the prerogative or the right, frankly, of the chief government whip to tell you how to do your job.

The Speaker: I agree with the member.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, if the member for Kingston and the Islands had run for Speaker, he certainly would have been somewhere on my ballot. I will not say where, but he would have been somewhere on my ballot.

I believe that it is important to summarize petitions and that we can read individual words, but we cannot read the petition into the record in its entirety, and that is precisely the rule that I have followed.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, having concluded the Venezuela petition, I have one more petition to table, and this is with respect to proposals to extend euthanasia to include minors.

The petitioners raise concern about a proposal to allow babies from birth to one year of age who have come into the world with severe deformities and very serious syndromes to have euthanasia. The petitioners say that the proposal for the legalized killing of infants is deeply disturbing to many Canadians. They call on the Government of Canada to block an attempt to allow the killing of children.

• (1020)

CYPRUS

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens and residents of Canada who would like to draw the attention of the House to the plight of the people of Cyprus.

The Turkish military invasion of Cyprus in 1974 was illegal and brutal, resulting in the ongoing occupation of 37% of the island and 57% of its coastline. The Turkish occupation led to significant human rights violations, including the loss of lives, the displacement of thousands of Cypriots and the ongoing presence of the Turkish military forces and illegal settlers.

This being the 50th anniversary of that tragic event, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to uphold all UN Security Council resolutions on Cyprus and condemn Turkey's ongoing illegal occupation of northern Cyprus; advocate for the immediate withdrawal of Turkish troops; ensure no Canadian arms, military equipment or technology is sold to Turkey for use against Cyprus or other oppressed groups; continue rejecting the recognition of the illegal occupation regime in northern Cyprus installed by Turkey; and, finally, advocate for a free, united Cyprus based on the relevant UN resolutions and the European Union acquis.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of many Canadians who are concerned about human rights protections in Turkey, Pakistan and Bahrain.

The petitioners say that Turkish, Pakistani and Bahraini officials have committed gross human rights violations against thousands of Turks, including eight Turkish Canadians. The petitioners say that Turkish officials have wrongfully detained over 300,000 people without reason, and these petitioners say that multiple international human rights groups can confirm these gross human rights violations in Turkey.

The petitioners are asking our Canadian government to closely monitor human rights conditions in Turkey, sanction the officials who have committed these gross human rights violations against eight Canadians and call on the Turkish, Pakistani and Bahraini governments to end all human rights violations in their respective countries.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I have is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about human rights protections in India. The petitioners say that, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, various actors are supporting and enforcing sectarian policies seeking to establish India as a Hindu state.

The petitioners are saying that Christians in India are being targeted by extremists vandalizing their churches, attacking church workers and threatening or intimidating the congregations. The petitioners also state that crimes against the Dalit groups, including Dalit women and girls, are increasing. The petitioners say that Indian Muslims are also at risk of genocide, assault and sexual assault.

The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to ensure that all trade deals with India are premised on mandatory human rights provisions, that extremists are sanctioned and that the government promotes respectful human rights dialogue between Canada and India.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Respectfully, I was having a look at the clock during the repeated interruptions and points of order from the government.

An hon. member: That is not a point of order.

Garnett Genuis: It is a point of order.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the clock was continuing to run during those points of order, but the clock should have been stopped to have 15 minutes for petitions. I would be concerned if the government whip were able to stop members from presenting petitions by repeatedly running out the 15-minute petition clock with these spurious points of order.

I wonder if we can review and add a little time, based on the interruptions to petitions, which should have led to the stopping of the time, by the government House leader and the government whip. I think Canadians would be very disappointed by their behaviour today.

In any event, it is important in the rules that the time be respected.

The Speaker: My understanding is that when these points of order are fairly short, the clock is not stopped. They were fairly short and pointed, so I will move on now to questions on the Order Paper.

* * *

• (1025)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 1

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): That a ways and means motion to introduce a bill respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, be concurred in.

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

[English]

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote, please.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1110)

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

Government Orders

(Division No. 4)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaif	Acan
Aitchison	Al Soud
Albas	Ali
Allison	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Auguste	Baber
Bailey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Bardeesy	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)	Bandayan
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Bittle
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Blois	Bonin
Bonk	Borrelli
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carney	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Chang	Chartrand
Chatel	Chen
Chenette	Chi
Church	Clark
Cobena	Cody
Connors	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Dancho	Dandurand
Danko	Davidson
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Niagara South)
Dawson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
DeRidder	Deschênes
Deschênes-Thériault	Desrochers
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Duclos	Duncan
Dzerowicz	Earle
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Epp	Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Falk (Provencher)	Fancy-Landry
Fanjoy	Fergus
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Gaheer
Gainey	Gallant
Garon	Gasparro
Gaudreau	Gazan
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)

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Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
 Godin
 Gould
 Grant
 Groleau
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 Hirtle
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 Hogan
 Housefather
 Iacono
 Jackson
 Jansen
 Jivani
 Joly
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 Kelly
 Khanna
 Kirkland
 Kmiec
 Koutrakis
 Kramp-Neuman
 Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot)
 Kusie
 Lake
 Lambropoulos
 Lantsman
 Lapointe (Sudbury)
 Lattanzio
 Lavack
 Lawrence
 LeBlanc
 Leitão
 Leslie
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lloyd
 Long
 Ma
 MacDonald (Cardigan)
 Mahal
 Malette (Bay of Quinte)
 Maloney
 Martel
 Mazier
 McKelvie
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLean (Calgary Centre)
 McPherson
 Ménard
 Menegakis
 Miedema
 Mingarelli
 Morin
 Morrissey
 Muys
 Naqvi
 Nathan
 Noormohamed
 Ntumba
 Olszewski
 Osborne
 Paul-Hus
 Petitpas Taylor
 Provost
 Rana
 Rempel Garner
 Richards
 Robertson

Gladu
 Goodridge
 Gourde
 Greaves
 Guay
 Guilbeault
 Gunn
 Hallan
 Hardy
 Hepfner
 Ho
 Hodgson
 Holman
 Hussen
 Idlout
 Jaczek
 Jeneroux
 Johns
 Joseph
 Kelloway
 Khalid
 Kibble
 Klassen
 Konanz
 Kram
 Kronis
 Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
 Kwan
 Lalonde
 Lamoureux
 Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
 Larouche
 Lauzon
 Lavoie
 Lawton
 Lefebvre
 Lemire
 Lewis (Essex)
 Lightbound
 Lobb
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Majumdar
 Malette (Kapuskaing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
 Mantle
 May
 McCauley
 McKenzie
 McKnight
 McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
 Melillo
 Mendès
 Michel
 Miller
 Moore
 Morrison
 Motz
 Myles
 Nater
 Nguyen
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 O'Rourke
 Patzer
 Perron
 Powlowski
 Ramsay
 Reid
 Reynolds
 Roberts
 Rochefort

Romanado
 Ross
 Royer
 Saini
 Sari
 Sawatzky
 Schiefke
 Seebach
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Small
 Solomon
 Steinley
 Stevenson
 Strahl
 Stubbs
 Tesser Derksen
 Thomas
 Tochor
 Turnbull
 Valdez
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 Vien
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 Yip
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 Sahota
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 Savard-Tremblay
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 Schmale
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 Sodhi
 Sousa
 Ste-Marie
 St-Pierre
 Strauss
 Suds
 Thériault
 Thompson
 Tolmie
 Uppal
 van Koeverden
 Vandenbeld
 Viersen
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Waugh
 Williamson
 Zahid
 Zimmer

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Chambers
 Duguid
 Plamondon
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Chong
 McGuinty
 Ruff
 Wilkinson— 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne moved that Bill C-4, An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, be read the first time and printed.

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

* * *

STRONG BORDERS ACT

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.) moved that 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, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Speaker. I know it is well deserved. In my many years of sitting beside you, I know the wisdom that you carry with you each and every day.

I want to also take this moment to congratulate all of my colleagues here who were elected on April 28.

I want to take a moment to thank the people of Scarborough—Guildwood—Rouge Park for the mandate they have given me four consecutive times. If anyone is counting, this time it was with 64% of the vote in my favour. Throughout the campaign, I heard a lot, some of which I will be sharing with the House today.

Permit me to acknowledge the land we are gathered on, which is the traditional territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin people.

On April 28, Canadians gave the Prime Minister a mandate to ensure the safety and security of Canadians. This was reinforced by His Majesty King Charles III in the Speech from the Throne last week. Canadians expect those of us in Parliament to work together and deliver for them. To be truly strong, Canada must be secure. A strong border is essential to our national security, to foster safe communities and our support for the economy. In recognition of this, our government has taken a number of important steps.

In December of last year, we introduced Canada's border plan, an ambitious \$1.3-billion investment to strengthen border security. We appointed a fentanyl czar, Kevin Brosseau, to work closely with our U.S. counterparts and law enforcement agencies to accelerate Canada's ongoing work to detect, disrupt and dismantle the fentanyl trade. We made sure to have eyes on the border 24-7, with more officers, drones, Black Hawk helicopters and sensors. We listed seven cartels as terrorist organizations and launched a Canada-U.S. joint strike force.

As part of a national law enforcement operation in early 2025 targeting fentanyl production and distribution, Canadian law enforcement made 524 arrests and seized more than 46 kilograms of fentanyl, 74 kilograms of other drugs, 122 firearms, 33 stolen vehicles and over \$800,000 in cash. Just last week, the CBSA released the results of Operation Blizzard, a month-long cross-country surge to intercept fentanyl and other illegal drugs. The operation resulted in 116 fentanyl seizures. Our enforcement-focused plan gives frontline officers the tools they need to secure our streets. We are seeing more busts, more arrests and safer communities.

• (1115)

[Translation]

This is important work, and I want to be clear with Canadians: Our borders are strong and secure, but we can always do more to strengthen them. The reality is that there are always new risks emerging that threaten our national and economic security.

[English]

For example, in recent years, transnational crime organizations have become more sophisticated. Increasingly, they are using technologies to evade law enforcement, which is hamstrung by outdated tools.

We need to make it harder for organized crime to move money, drugs, people and firearms and to endanger our communities. We need to ensure Canada's law enforcement is equipped with the tools it needs to stay ahead of organized crime and empowered to crack down on illicit activities. This is essential to maintaining the safety and security of our country.

Bill C-2, the strong borders act, would help achieve just that. The bill would keep Canadians safe by ensuring law enforcement has

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the right tools to keep our borders secure, combat transnational organized crime, stop the flow of illegal fentanyl and crack down on money laundering. It would bolster our response to increasingly sophisticated criminal networks and enhance the integrity and fairness of our immigration system, all the while protecting Canadians' privacy and charter rights.

Let me take a moment at the outset to talk about some of the safeguards that are in place. As we know, when we ran in the election, we did confirm and reiterate our support for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In fact, it was a previous Liberal prime minister and justice minister who brought forward the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As such, it is a foundational piece of the work that we do.

King Charles III, in his Speech from the Throne last week, reiterated our government's support for the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the guideposts by which we will work to govern this country. As a result, when we speak about national security legislation, which essentially enforces additional tools for law enforcement, it should be with the premise that the rights of Canadians will not be violated. Privacy rights will be protected. Charter rights will be protected, and due process will always be there for Canadians.

Let me share an experience that I had just last month, days after I was appointed to this role. I travelled to Cornwall to meet with the frontline officers of the CBSA and the RCMP, who work hard each and every day to keep our country safe and our border secure. Those officers shared with me their perspectives and ideas on how this government can best support them in their important work. I hope those officers will see their feedback reflected in the bill we are now debating in Parliament. When I spoke to them, they spoke about some of the challenges and limitations they have and some of the basic tools they are missing, tools they need in order to do their work effectively and efficiently to ensure that our borders are safer. It is a safe border, but we want to make it safer.

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The strong borders act would keep Canadians safe by, for example, equipping law enforcement with the tools needed to disrupt, dismantle and prosecute the organized criminal networks threatening our communities. It would grant border officers more powers to search export containers to stop auto theft rings from smuggling stolen cars out of the country. It would update the Coast Guard's mission and responsibilities to protect our sovereignty and conduct security patrols to collect, analyze and share information and intelligence for security purposes. The bill would give us the tools needed to, for example, clamp down on clandestine drug production by stopping the flow of precursor chemicals that are used to make fentanyl. We would go after transnational child sex offenders by sharing more information with domestic and international policing partners and crack down on money laundering to hit organized crime groups where it hurts. Further, the strong borders act would strengthen measures to stamp out immigration fraud, improve the asylum system and protect the integrity of our visas.

My colleagues do not have to take my word for it; let me share some of the perspectives already offered on this bill. First off, the Canadian Police Association, the largest law enforcement advocacy organization in Canada and the national voice for over 60,000 frontline law enforcement personnel serving across every province and territory, said:

[T]his proposed legislation would provide critical new tools for law enforcement, border services, and intelligence agencies to address transnational organized crime, auto theft, firearms and drug trafficking, and money laundering. It's important to emphasize that these are not abstract issues, our members see first-hand that they have real impacts in communities across the country and require a coordinated and modern legislative response.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to share the comments by Marta Leardi-Anderson, the executive director of the Cross-Border Institute at the University of Windsor, who said that the new measures are “long overdue”.

Équité, the national authority on insurance crime and fraud prevention, said:

This legislation directly supports law enforcement and the CBSA in strengthening their ability to combat sophisticated criminal networks threatening the safety and security of communities across Canada.... [T]he enhanced authorities granted to CBSA and law enforcement agencies...will strengthen our collective ability to disrupt illegal operations, including the trafficking and distribution of drugs and firearms funded by the proceeds of auto theft.

● (1120)

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection, an incredible organization, a national charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children and whose goal is to reduce the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, said that the changes proposed in the strong borders act “would reduce barriers Canadian police face when investigating the growing number of online crimes against children [and] have the full support” of the organization.

Let me also quote from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, which made a statement yesterday:

Canada's legislation related to lawful access is significantly outdated and urgently needs to be revised to align with modern technology. Canada lags behind its international law enforcement partners in the ability to lawfully access electronic evidence associated with criminal activity. Transnational organised crime groups are exploiting this gap to victimize our communities across the country through serious crimes such as human, drug and firearm trafficking, auto theft, and violent profit-driven crime. The provisions contained within the Strong Borders Act are an impor-

tant step in advancing Canadian law enforcement's ability to effectively combat the ever-evolving nature of transnational organized criminal groups.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada added that the strong borders act is “an important step toward combating auto theft & organized crime. This legislation shows leadership and is a win for Canadians.” The strong borders act is a win for Canadians and deals a blow to transnational organized crime.

When developing the legislation that is before the House, the government had three major objectives: one, secure the border; two, combat transnational organized crime and fentanyl; three, disrupt illicit financing.

To secure the border, we propose to amend the Customs Act to compel transporters and warehouse operators to provide access to their premises to allow for export inspections by CBSA officers, and require owners and operators of certain ports of entry and exit to provide facilities to export inspections, just as they currently do for imports. Just to be clear, currently the law allows the CBSA to do inspections upon exit of goods from Canada. However, there is no compulsion of any of these organizations to provide the adequate space and resources to do the inspection. This amendment would ensure that space will be available for that inspection to take place, which is a critical tool for us to fight, for example, auto thefts.

We are proposing to amend the Oceans Act to add security-related activities, such as countering criminal activity and drug trafficking, and enable the Canadian Coast Guard to conduct security patrols and share information with security, defence and intelligence partners.

We would be amending the Sex Offender Information Registration Act to enhance the ability of law enforcement agencies to share information collected under the act with domestic and international partners.

We would be amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act, and we would secure and extend legislative authorities to cancel, suspend or vary immigration documents and cancel or suspend processing of new applications en masse for reasons determined to be in the public interest. A perfect example of this is the number of applications that came in for temporary resident permits during COVID. We were compelled to process them, because there was no mechanism under IRPA to be able to cancel or suspend those applications. This essentially gives additional tools to the minister of IRCC to do just that.

We would amend the act to disclose information for the purpose of co-operation with federal partners and to uphold the integrity and fairness of the asylum system, including by streamlining the intake, processing and adjudication of claims. As an example here, the sharing of information between federal and provincial partners is critical. However, it does not lead towards sharing of information with foreign actors without the express written consent of the minister of IRCC, which is subject to many multilateral and bilateral agreements that currently exist. It will ensure, once again, the safety and privacy rights of those who come to Canada.

• (1125)

The strong borders act would also create new ineligibility measures to make certain claims ineligible to be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board. For example, it would limit the safe third country agreement provision where someone makes a claim after 14 days when they come through an irregular port of entry; they would no longer be eligible for an asylum claim. Similarly, those who have been in-country for more than a year and have not sought asylum before the one-year period are ineligible. In both cases, the safeguard that is in place is the availability of what is called a pre-removal risk assessment, which would ensure that those seeking protection and those in need of protection will have protection within Canada. It abides by our commitments to the UN convention on refugees.

To combat transnational organized crime and fentanyl, we are proposing to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to change the pathway to allow precursor chemicals that can be used to produce illicit drugs to be rapidly controlled by the Minister of Health. Currently, it can take up to a year. This would happen within days or weeks, which would enable us to be close to changes in precursors and the impact of new precursors on the drug supply. It would be an important tool for us.

We are also introducing amendments to support authorized access to information, to ensure that electronic service providers have the capabilities in place to support legally authorized requests from law enforcement and CSIS. I have already heard some misunderstandings of what we are trying to do. Let me just quickly walk through some of the major components of the amendments related to lawful access.

First and foremost, we are seeking for CSPs to be able to have the capacity to share data. Right now, not all service providers have that capability. This essentially compels service providers to have the capacity to share data. Second, it would enable law enforcement to go to a service provider and ask if the phone number they have is

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with that company. It is simply a yes-or-no question. If it is with that company, then, if additional information is required, law enforcement would go to court and seek a production order, which is through an affidavit and an application to court, to be able to get, on the basis of what is called reasonable grounds to suspect, authorization to get information on a subscriber, very basic information on a subscriber. It oftentimes includes name, address and phone number, very basic information.

The fourth element is this. If there is a much more serious investigation taking place, where law enforcement believes that something may have happened, it can file, on the basis of reasonable grounds to believe, an application to the court, once again, to seek authorization toward additional investigation. In all of these steps, whether it is on the basis of reasonable grounds to suspect or reasonable grounds to believe, it is through judicial authorization. It is something that I want to be very, very clear about. It is a tool that is so essential right now for law enforcement to be able to investigate many of the crimes that are now evolving in a modern era, where so much information is within individuals' control.

Bill C-2 would enact significant penalties for illicit financing, and it would enable law enforcement and agencies to enforce, in a much stricter way, penalties for any form of illicit fundraising that takes place.

Let me just conclude by saying that we committed to investing in 1,000 new CBSA officers and 1,000 new RCMP officers. They are critical.

The bill that we have brought forward is a response to what we heard at the doors. Many of us heard about the concerns that Canadians have. This is a moment when all of us can come together and ensure that our borders are safer and secure. As a result, our communities and our streets would be safer and more secure. This should be a non-partisan exercise, and I invite our friends opposite, all of the parties, to support this bill.

• (1130)

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

One thing the minister and I agree on is safer borders and safer streets, but the really big area where I think we part company is how to do that. On the one hand, we have the Liberal approach, which is to talk about safer streets and safer borders and do little about that, and in fact do the contrary, in the form of Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. Then we have the Conservatives, who want to take definitive action.

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We have an omnibus bill here; let us make no mistake about it. Why is there nothing in it about precluding fentanyl traffickers from serving their sentence at home and precluding people who use firearms from serving their sentence at home? Why are there no tough-on-crime measures like that, which are tangibly needed?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, first, I want to acknowledge my critic opposite. I have worked with him before at committee, and I look forward to working with him in this role.

Let me be very clear. We will be bringing forward criminal justice legislation in due course. This is the first bill that our government has introduced, which is to ensure that we have a safer border and safer streets.

With respect to changes to the Criminal Code, once again, we look forward to working with all parties in order to keep Canadians safer.

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this bill was introduced two days ago, and we have had to analyze all 130 pages of it. At first glance, we are generally in favour of the bill in principle.

However, given that it is 130 pages long, affects more than three departments and could possibly amend some 20 laws, I hope that the minister agrees with me that it will require thorough, detailed work in committee. There is no way that such a bill should be fast-tracked; that would not make any sense. There are far too many clauses to consider, and we do not even know if some of them would stand up in court.

I am going to test the minister. There are so many questions surrounding this bill, but there is one that must be raised. I am thinking in particular of the suggestion to remove the possibility of compelling the minister and members of his staff to appear before the Refugee Protection Division.

Why was this included in the document presented by the minister today?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, let me see if I understood the question properly. With respect to the measures, the additional tools that are given to the Minister of Immigration, particularly the suspension of documents, are subject to an order in council that has to go through cabinet, and it has to be approved before the minister can exercise control.

If I misunderstood the question, I would be glad to speak with the member further, but the tools are in place to ensure that the Minister of Immigration has additional tools so that in the modern era, whether we have, for example, a pandemic or issues around cybersecurity, she will have the tools to make those decisions.

• (1135)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank the minister for being so quick to present this bill in the House. There are needed provisions in this legislation that fill the gaps.

As we know, we are dealing with a lot of sophisticated, organized criminal networks that are threatening our communities. These tools will help disrupt, dismantle and prosecute these individuals. I can think of some examples, and I know the minister named some in his speech: fentanyl trafficking, extortion, child exploitation and all the problems we are having that involve criminal organizations.

I am wondering if the minister could provide some other examples of criminality that this bill would help solve.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague for her hard work and her comments.

One thing the member has been advocating for for many years is the issue of auto theft. While we know the numbers with respect to auto theft are coming down, whether it is in the city of Toronto or across Canada, the tools that law enforcement need have to be strengthened, and this bill would ensure that. I highlighted the issue of inspections upon export. Right now, although the legal authority to do them exists, the physical space and capacity do not exist in most ports of exit, and this is one tangible thing included in this bill that would enable the CBSA to do searches.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Bill C-2 passes, it would allow CSIS, police and peace officers to demand personal info from online service providers without a warrant based only on vague suspicions of potential crime or legal breaches of any act of Parliament. Whether or not a Canadian uses an online service, where they use it and when they use it are personal information, and the government has not provided a charter statement for the same.

With Bill C-2, combined with Bill C-63, the government could target whatever it deems to be spreading hateful content. Bill C-2 would combine with Bill C-63 to essentially form *Voltron*-type censorship. The government has not indicated what policy concerns, aside from vague references to security, these provisions are needed for. These snooping provisions are a massive poison pill that should not have been included in this bill.

Why, as they did with Bill C-63, are the Liberals making Canadians choose between their civil liberties and safety and fixing the broken immigration system that the Liberals broke themselves?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. The issue around lawful access requires modernization in Canada. We are the only Five Eyes and G7 country that does not have a lawful access regime. Every other country in our category has provisions to ensure that as new technology emerges, new techniques are available for law enforcement.

Having said that, this bill does not violate the civil liberties or rights of individual Canadians. It is subject to judicial oversight. This bill was only introduced two days ago. There will be a charter statement coming, and there will be a robust debate on this issue.

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[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his bill. It addresses many of the Bloc Québécois's concerns regarding border security, organized crime and so on. However, there is one thing in this massive bill that bothers me and raises numerous questions, and that is the security of personal information. The bill would significantly expand police powers.

Would it not be possible to limit the ability to conduct searches without a warrant? This could include the obligation to prove that obtaining a warrant is impossible.

The section about communicating information to other countries is very troubling. My colleague is telling us that there will be measures, eventually. I understand that, but I would like him to tell us more. What will those measures be?

This aspect of the bill could be a concern.

• (1140)

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, there are two elements that I want to highlight. First and foremost, the sharing of information is subject to judicial oversight, and it is clearly written in the bill. I invite my friend, who I know is a learned individual and whom I have worked with extensively in the past, to understand that it is a safeguard built into the bill. This is not about taking away privacy rights or in any way impinging on the privacy rights of Canadians. It is about securing the ability of law enforcement to have limited access, with judicial oversight. That is in there.

With respect to the sharing of information with third countries, again, safeguards relating to IRPA are in place and are embedded in the bill.

Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for the introduction of this bill.

Much of my time here in Ottawa is spent on the public safety committee, and many of these issues have been brought up for years, as has the need to improve upon the law. In my previous career in law enforcement, we had similar issues that we were bringing forward over and over again.

My question is twofold. There has been so much pressure to deal with the smuggling of firearms, the fentanyl issues and the porous borders with immigration. One, what took so long to get at this? Two, we have provisions in the act—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I have to provide some time for a response.

The Minister of Public Safety may give a brief response.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to having a longer discussion with my friend opposite.

We were elected on April 30. The Prime Minister had a mandate to ensure that we address the border issues. As a first act of Parliament, we brought in this legislation, and we are looking for support from all parties to get this bill through the House.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. I welcome you to the chair. I am amazed at how quickly you got your robes: congratulations.

As always, it is an honour to be here. It is an honour to share this space with colleagues from all parties. As somebody who was the child of immigrants and never really thought he would see the green carpet of the House of Commons, except when I saw it at 12 years old looking through doors similar to the ones here but in Centre Block, it is such a profound honour. With that, in my first substantive intervention in this House, I want to thank the voters of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

It is Italian Heritage Month, which seems quite poignant given that there are so many people of Italian heritage. I know we are welcoming two or three to our side of the bench and that there are a few on the other side. I congratulate all members.

Speaking of congratulations, I want to begin by congratulating a former colleague at the bar in Kamloops. Her name is Justice Lorraina Bennett. She was actually promoted to the bench, I believe, by the Minister of Public Safety when he was the minister of justice. I appeared briefly before Justice Bennett when I was still working as a lawyer for the province. I believe she will be a wonderful addition to the Supreme Court of B.C., to which she was recently elevated. It being Italian Heritage Month, I should note as well that she is of Italian heritage, like me and many others here. I wish Justice Bennett all the best in her judicial career.

On a bit of a sadder note, a lot of people have passed during prorogation and the election. Those who have heard me speak in the House before know that during my speeches, I often like to recognize people who have passed.

I want to recognize the life of David Richard Bartlett, who was just 37 years old. His father Jim was my boss when I first entered the workforce at about 22 years old as a parole officer. His dad taught me a lot. David leaves behind his brother Andrew. May perpetual light shine upon him.

On a sadder note, I also want to recognize the life of Augusto Bernardo. Like my family, he originated from Calabria in southern Italy. I have such fond memories of Augusto. I remember going to his farm when I was eight or nine years old to get chickens with my dad. He was such a character. I always remember him smiling whenever I saw him. He was always so excited and happy to say hi to me. I miss that vivacious smile. I know he lived a really good life. His children Donisa, Gisella, Marcella and Dino are all incredibly successful people, but more importantly, they all have wonderful hearts. They all serve their community in such a beautiful way. His legacy is well entrenched in his children. May perpetual light shine upon him.

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Another person who passed away very young was a man by the name of Chris McKenzie. He was about my age or maybe a few years older than me. We got to know each other when we were in youth group. We travelled all the way from Kamloops to Denver to see the Pope in 1993. We went to high school together. He was a talented musician. He had a love of music, and he always had a smile on his face when we were in school. He leaves behind daughters Trystan, Brooklynn and Danica, their mother Tammy, his mother Darlene, his father Dawayne and his siblings Charla, Heather and Andrew. May perpetual light shine upon him.

● (1145)

I have a few more people I wish to go through, but in the meantime, perhaps I will get to the substance of my speech.

Let us make no mistake about it: This is an omnibus bill. I cannot say how many times the Liberals spoke about omnibus bills. We often hear about the ghost of Stephen Harper, and the Liberals have frequently railed against the Harper government and omnibus bills, yet here we have the government tabling an omnibus bill.

However, the bill is not quite omnibus enough to include key areas. Let us look at the bill. It is 130 pages. I am just looking at it right now, and I do not see anything about bail, which is a pretty big issue in the news today. It is pretty much in the news every single day. There is nothing about bail in the bill.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Does he want bail in it?

Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, my colleague just asked if we want bail in it. Heck yes, I want bail in it. We really want to deal with bail. We, as Conservatives, want to deal with bail. In fact, I had two private members' bills that dealt with bail during the last Parliament. One of the bills was in response to the killing of Constable Pierzchala, a police officer. He was in his mid-twenties.

I believe I could say that Constable Pierzchala was killed, as the person is no longer accused, as they went to trial. He was killed by somebody who was out on bail. It was the constable's first shift alone. He had just passed his probation period. That person also had a firearms prohibition, and those prohibitions are now being treated like they are not worth the paper they are written on.

Therefore, to my colleague from Winnipeg, who heckled me and asked if I want bail in the bill, yes, we want bail in the bill. I will gladly take him up on that. I will gladly meet with the Minister of Public Safety.

In fact, in questions and comments, I want the member for Winnipeg North to stand up. It does not take much to cajole him to stand up, even if there are 30 people behind him. The Liberals are laughing because they know it is true. I want the member to stand up to tell me whether the Liberals will pass Bill C-313 from the last Parliament, which would make the hill much harder to climb for people who were previously convicted of gun charges and placed on firearms prohibitions. This is a small, discreet group of people.

In the member's prelude, I challenge him to say that the Liberals will support Bill C-313 or my other private member's bill on bail, which targeted a very small, discreet group of people who were being accused of three indictable offences at one time, as in those files had not been resolved, with 10 years or more. Those are offences

such as robbery, manslaughter, assault with a weapon and assault causing bodily harm, by indictment. The member has been here for a long time, and he speaks on behalf of the government. Does he have the guts to stand up to say that the Liberals will incorporate the principles of those bills in this bill? I would love to work with the government to address bail.

What about fentanyl sentencing? I wonder if the member for Winnipeg North is onside with his party's views on sentencing. We are getting this tough-on-crime stuff from the Liberals. Do members know what we heard? In fact, now that I come to think of it, it was from the member from Winnipeg. I introduced a bill about sexual offences, and the whole point of the bill on sexual offences was to raise the sentences. A lot of people do not know this, but sexual offences are treated less seriously than property offences in some regards. For instance, if someone breaks into a house, the maximum sentence is life imprisonment. If they rob somebody, which is theft with an element of violence, they can go to jail for life. However, if someone takes a person's dignity and consent, which is a crime of violence just like robbery, the maximum sentence is 10 years, so I brought this up. The member for Winnipeg heckled, "Tough on crime." The Liberals are telling us how tough on crime they are now, when they mocked us the last time. They will not only tell us how tough they are on crime but also do little about it.

● (1150)

In this omnibus bill, it says that offenders can serve their sentence for trafficking in fentanyl from their couch. There is going to be 10 minutes for questions and comments, and I challenge any Liberal who rises to say to me, through the Speaker, "I agree with that. I agree that, for people who traffic in one of the deadliest drugs, if not the deadliest drug that we know of, who are literally peddling poison, it is okay that they sit at home playing their video game system, listening to their favourite music and sleeping in their bed, when they are literally peddling poison." I am speaking right to the Liberals here, those who are prepared to look me in the eye to say that.

Let us go to another one, which is firearms offences. One of the offences in a case called *R. v. Oud*, out of British Columbia, and it was upheld by the B.C. Court of Appeal as being a constitutional mandatory minimum. Discharge with intent is a drive-by shooting and those types of things. The Liberals legislated that offenders could serve that sentence at home. Previously, it was a four-year mandatory minimum. They kept the five-year minimum if it was a handgun or a restricted firearm, but oftentimes the guns are not ever recovered. Nobody says, "I just did a drive-by. Police, here is the gun." This does not happen.

The Liberals are telling us that they are tough on crime. They say, "Look at our borders act." It is 130 pages. "Look at this, we are so tough on crime." I challenge any member of the Liberals to stand up to say, through the Speaker, "I am okay with people who do drive-by shootings to serve their sentence at home." People will say, "Oh, you are just tough on crime indiscriminately."

To the contrary, I think most people deserve a second chance. In fact, a lot of people do. Some people deserve a second chance because they have done something stupid. They have made decisions. They got into an addiction. A lot of people I saw were in a car accident and were then prescribed opiates. The next thing they knew, they had an opiates addiction.

We are not talking about locking the door and throwing away the key for the majority of offenders. We are talking about a small, discreet group of offenders. Nowhere in this bill does it talk about those things. We are prepared to talk about everything but. We are prepared to talk about Internet service providers and whether they have to turn over their materials without a warrant. That is in response to a recent Supreme Court of Canada decision. For those who do not know, an ISP address is easily discoverable. As I recall, and I have not read or looked at the case in some time, the court said a warrant is needed. There is an expectation of privacy there.

I could go on and on about what is not in this bill. Again, I will challenge my Liberal colleagues. Will they have the guts to stand up to say, "I am okay with those things." If they are not okay with those things, then why are they not petitioning the government to amend the bill to be tough on the crimes they say they are tough on.

This bill has a number of elements to it. It has 16 parts. Obviously, the first part we are dealing with looks at CBSA, the Canada Border Services Agency, and its ability to do searches. This is interesting, as the Leader of the Opposition, in the last Parliament, would say people were literally tracking their cars to our ports and seeing them go into containers. They were told they could not trespass on that port. People wanted to get their cars back, but they could not do it. We got laughed at, as Conservatives, for this, for our supposed tough-on-crime approach, yet the Liberals are saying that Conservatives need to pass this omnibus bill.

• (1155)

We have a lot of questions about the bill, and I think Canadians deserve to have those questions answered.

The Canada Post Corporation Act would be amended, through part 4 of the bill "to permit the demand, seizure, detention or retention of anything in the course of post only in accordance with an Act of Parliament." As I understand that, this is a judicial authori-

zation commonly known as a warrant. Typically, it is a warrant that is embedded there. This is really interesting, and I would love for the government to expand on this, because this is something I know I am going to get mail about, if I have not gotten it already.

Part 4 would allow Canada Post Corporation to open mail in certain circumstances. As I understand it, and I am not an expert in this regard, the nature of mail has been that it has been regarded as private since Confederation. In other words, Canada Post has not been able to open somebody's mail. This is the reason we are now talking about the language in the Charter and what is referred to as an expectation of privacy.

The highest expectation is on our bodies. Then we have things like our phones and letters, but there is still an expectation of privacy there, so I would really like for the government to explain what that threshold would be and why it is that Canada Post would be doing this. Those are questions that we really need to have answered.

Similarly, there are the Canadian Coast Guard provisions. How are they going to look in practice? This is a really significant bill that I think we need a bit more information on. I am mindful of the fact that we always will have rights of the individual, and I noticed that many of my Liberal colleagues stood up and clapped when they spoke about being the party of the Charter of Rights. As my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill noted, there is no charter statement here.

The government was able to give us a 130-page bill with 16 parts, and when we ask where the charter statement is, there is a bit of the proverbial shoulder shrug, with the statement, "It just came out two days ago." If the Liberals can put out a 130-page bill, certainly they can put out a four- or five-page charter statement. It would amaze me if nobody in the government went through this document and asked if it was charter compliant. Certainly somebody did.

We have a government that is saying, "We are all about the charter; we believe in this," but it will not tell Canadians what its experts have said about whether this legislation is charter compliant. As a critic, how am I to respond to people who have very good faith inquiries about this type of legislation?

The next part of the bill gets into citizenship and immigration. I am not going to touch on that, because I know that my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill will be dealing with that.

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The last thing I want to do is reflect on the life of a good friend. His name was Mark Evarden. He was not Canadian, but he touched the lives of many Canadians. Mark passed away unexpectedly of a heart attack just before the election. I cannot understate the profound influence that this man had on my life. He leaves behind his children, Stephen, Lauren and Patrick. I got to spend time with Mark and Patrick right around the pandemic and just before it. Mark touched so many lives, and I wanted to recognize him here, through his work in youth ministry for the church and as a servant. May perpetual light shine upon him. It was my honour to know him.

With that, I will conclude my speech and take questions.

● (1200)

[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.) : Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the opposition member for his speech and his challenge to us on this matter. I listened to him carefully. We agree on a number of points. What we want is for all Canadians to feel safe and secure.

That being said, we must not mislead Canadians. We are talking about a bill that will be discussed and debated. There are a number of elements that I hope will lead to co-operation from the members opposite. When we present a working document, we hope to have their co-operation. That is a good discussion that we could have.

That being said, in his speech, I think my colleague tried to see what is not really in the bill and what should be added, but he seems to have forgotten to talk about the initial work that is already there. I do not really understand where the opposition is going with this. We are trying to give our police forces the tools they need to do their job. We know that criminal groups are adapting their way of doing things and accelerating their use of technology for cyber-crime, among other things. We want to give police forces the tools they need.

We want to fight crime, but we see that, unfortunately, the members opposite are not following suit. In his speech, my colleague talked a lot about police work, but I see that what is missing from the opposition's discourse is prevention—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member because the question has far exceeded the allotted time.

[English]

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague. He may not know, and I did not talk about it because people are tired of hearing about it, but I was a prosecutor in my prior life, where I focused mostly on prosecuting Internet offences against kids. I am very well aware of judicial authorizations, of the hurdles those types of things can present, and of the fact that the bill is a direct response to some of the decisions. I am very clear on that.

My colleague did mention that he was rising to the challenge, but we did not actually hear him say whether he supports house arrest for fentanyl traffickers and for people who do drive-by shootings. I would invite him to get up again, very briefly, and say, “Yes, I support this.”

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, with whom I will have the honour of serving on the public safety committee, which will hopefully be convened soon.

He talked a lot about privacy. I agree with him. There will be a lot of discussion in committee on this issue, because there is a thin line between protecting security and protecting personal and confidential information.

I would like to take him in another direction. The bill would give additional powers to border services officers to inspect rail cars in marshalling yards, for example. Rail cars are currently inspected at the time of import, but not at the time of export.

Does he agree with the part of the bill that calls for rail cars to be inspected by border services officers? As a result, is he not concerned that there are not enough officers right now to meet the demand? How does he think the government is going to manage to add more powers when resources are limited?

● (1205)

[English]

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, it will be an honour for me as well to sit with my colleague around the committee table as the public safety critic. We have not had a chance to work together before, but I do look forward to working with her and perhaps practising my French. Her question was what I would call a fairly loaded one because it had elements of generalities with respect to our not having enough agents to do this, but also the specificity about the rail cars.

What I can say right now is that she is right; we do not have the agents to do this. The minister actually spoke about, and I think \$300 million is what was referred to earlier, how we are going to start having scanners and things like that. Why are they not there already? It is just a colossal failure by the government to not have them there.

My colleague is right that there is a labour shortage in this regard. This actually highlights one of the biggest issues I have with many of the government's interventions: It is always “we are going to” and is never “we are going to do this, and this is how we are going to get there.” The government cannot build homes. The government cannot even plant trees. How is the government going to secure the border?

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, the intervention by my friend and colleague was great, and I want to thank him for the expertise he brings to the chamber on the issues of public safety and criminal justice.

One of the reasons I got involved in politics in 2003 and was elected in 2004 was that I opposed the Liberals' long-gun registry. Over the past 10 years, the Liberals have continued to vilify law-abiding long-gun owners, licensed firearms owners, and to give a pass to criminals who are actually committing crimes.

I want to just ask my colleague, our shadow minister for public safety, whether he sees anything in Bill C-2 that would actually restore the property rights of law-abiding firearms owners and take guns away from criminals who are committing crimes on our streets.

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I have learned a lot from my colleague. We first met a number of years ago, and it has been really great just to walk with him in my parliamentary journey.

I see nothing in the bill that deals with firearms.

Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, like so much of Canada, is a rural area. I believe there are 27 first nations in my riding, and hunting is integral to those first nations. We have heard the Liberals speaking out of both sides of their mouth on the issue; they say that we need to really crack down on guns and illegal guns used in shootings, yet they are burying us in more bureaucracy without going after people who repeatedly breach firearms prohibitions and things like that. I see nothing in Bill C-2 on this.

I see that the member for Winnipeg North is going to ask a question. I challenge him to stand up and say whether he is in favour of my proposed bill, Bill C-313, on bail, and whether he still supports house arrest for people who do drive-by shootings and who traffic fentanyl.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a little bit more relevant to the issue is whether the Conservative Party actually supports Bill C-2.

We have the Canadian Police Association, which represents tens of thousands of frontline law enforcement officers, and the Conservatives are playing this whole cat-and-mouse game, trying to put out a little bait here and there. The bottom line is that, whether this is about President Trump's concerns, Canadian concerns, or law enforcement concerns, the bill should go to committee, ideally soon.

Does the Conservative Party, and does the member opposite, who represents the Conservative Party, support the legislation? Would they not agree that time is of the essence?

• (1210)

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, that was the most cat-and-mouse response I have ever heard. I challenged him. He speaks more than all other Liberal members combined, so I think he could address the challenge. Does he support house arrest for people who traffic fentanyl? I challenged him, but he would not even answer; he just heckled me. He should give me an answer.

We do not even have a charter statement yet. The bill is a 130-page document. The Liberals say they want to move in an expeditious manner, but they took 10 years to get here. They have been talking out of both sides of their mouth in that regard.

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[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, since this is the first round of speeches on the bill, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to share my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, as the official Bloc Québécois public safety and emergency preparedness critic, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-2.

I would remind the House that, today, we are beginning the speeches and debate on a bill and related measures aimed at securing the border between Canada and the United States. As my Conservative colleague mentioned, this 130-page bill amends some 10 laws. The session has just begun, and, as the new critic in this area, I find the study of this bill very challenging. This is a massive and complex bill with three main objectives: securing the border, fighting transnational organized crime and fentanyl, and cracking down on illicit financing. The bill is divided into 16 parts

It is no secret that the Bloc Québécois has long been demanding stricter border controls, including stronger measures against the exportation of stolen vehicles, a reduction in the number of asylum seekers in Quebec and a crackdown on fentanyl and money laundering. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Bloc Québécois agrees in principle to allow the bill to go to committee for a more in-depth study. I cannot find a better word than "in-depth", which implies thoroughness and, especially, the time needed to hear from all the experts in the matter. This is not the type of bill that can be studied at breakneck speed. It will have to be studied in depth because it grants ministers, the police, the Canadian Coast Guard and Canada Post more powers. It also allows various authorities to exchange personal and confidential information. As legislators, we will need to hear from a large number of witnesses given the many laws that will be amended.

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We hope that parliamentarians will work together to better understand the bill and, especially, to enhance it based on the testimony of the experts we will hear from at meetings of the public safety and national security committee. As our reputation would suggest, the Bloc Québécois is committed to studying Bill C-2 in depth and collaborating with all parliamentarians to make it better. In fact, that is, in a sense, our trademark. Our members take their work as legislators seriously. This bill is important, and it is complex. Let us take all the time we need to study it in depth.

As I was saying, several acts will be amended, including the Customs Act. Essentially, Bill C-2 proposes forcing carriers and warehouse operators to provide access to their facilities to allow Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, officers to inspect goods destined for export. Currently, the act does not allow officers to inspect U.S.-bound rail cars in classification yards, for example. It is surprising that operators are not currently required to allow CBSA officers to inspect rail cars in their own classification yards. However, the bill proposes that operators now be obliged to establish infrastructure to receive border services officers.

This raises a number of questions, however. How will railway companies manage to set up such infrastructure to receive border services officers and allow them to conduct inspections? Anyone who has ever visited a classification yard knows that the railway companies will have to make major changes. How long will they be given to comply? How will the CBSA carry out its inspections in the classification yards?

Will they have mobile scanners?

Will the CBSA have the funds it needs to procure the tools and advanced technologies needed to carry out its inspections?

• (1215)

What instructions will the CBSA give its officers? It is estimated that the CBSA already has a shortage of between 2,000 and 3,000 border services officers for current duties. If they are given new responsibilities, however necessary, there will be an even greater shortage of border officers. We know that we can train approximately 600 border officers per year. I am not great at math, but it is easy enough to see that, if we train 600 border officers a year, we will not have the resources we need to inspect everything that we are supposed to inspect under Bill C-2.

There is also the fact that the promise to hire 1,000 additional border officers was not included in the throne speech. The throne speech does not mention that. We hope that we will have the opportunity to discuss that when we look at the business of supply this evening. Given the number of border services officers, granting them additional powers will be a colossal challenge.

We assume that border officers will be assigned to priority sectors. What are the priorities, and which sectors will have fewer resources to carry out their duties? Railway companies, for example, might resist establishing the infrastructure needed for inspection in the classification yards. If that were to happen, how would we send officers to inspect the yards? These are some of the many questions that we have and that we will have an opportunity to discuss in committee.

We are also wondering whether the government assessed the amount of work that will be required of railway companies. Were discussions held with them? I represent a riding that is crisscrossed by railway tracks and that is home to several railway companies. I can tell you that the railway lobby is very strong in Canada. How will companies react to this new requirement?

There are many questions to be answered. That is why it is important that we conduct an exhaustive study of this bill in committee.

With respect to giving border officers more powers, the government could pass regulations allowing border officers to patrol beyond their crossing point. This is not currently allowed. This is something the Bloc Québécois proposed as a way to improve co-operation, in particular between RCMP officers and border officers, in order to make the border more secure. As the member for a border riding, I can say that this would be extremely appreciated and very important. That way, patrolling officers who see a migrant or someone trying to cross the border illegally 50 metres off could intervene. They could intercept the person and contact the RCMP.

As I was saying earlier, this would not require any legislative amendments. It could be done through regulations easily enough. If the government commits to doing that, it will certainly have our support.

I have much more to say, but my time is running out. We know that this important law is very intrusive when it comes to privacy. I trust that my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord will outline his concerns and ask questions. My colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean will be speaking next, so he will be able to ask questions and talk about his doubts concerning the amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. He will also mention aspects of the bill with which he disagrees.

In conclusion, I would like the government to know that, if it respects our willingness to work hard in a professional way, and if it gives us the time we need to study the entire bill, we will work with it in committee to enhance and improve Bill C-2.

• (1220)

[English]

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I first want to thank my colleague for her support and the Bloc's recommendations over time that have helped inform this bill. I appreciate that she is going to allow this bill to go to committee.

I too hope the ports and the various operators involved will give their full support. The CBSA has seen at times in the past that there has not been full co-operation, which has hindered the ability of law enforcement to catch outgoing automobiles, which has become a big issue in the area I live in. I hope we will see that co-operation.

Since the member is saying that many of those stakeholders reside within her riding, I want to know whether the member would be willing to work with those stakeholders to make sure this bill is not impeded and that we have support across party lines to carry this work forward and reduce the harm coming to Canadians with automobiles that are going outside of our country.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, let me reassure my colleague. As the member for a riding that borders the U.S., I have many contacts at the RCMP and the CBSA, among both the employers and the unions. For that reason, I can say that some of the decisions being made now are not at all consistent with the principle of Bill C-2.

Let me give an example. Two border crossings in my riding have had their hours of service cut. Border crossings used to be monitored 24/7. The CBSA cut 12 hours of monitoring. That means that, in the middle of the countryside, in the middle of a rural area, there are two border crossings, Herdman and Trout River, where there is no monitoring. Municipal officials in both Quebec and the United States disagree with the decision, since it does nothing to protect our borders.

My colleague should urge the Minister of Public Safety to review the decision to reduce the number of hours of monitoring at the Trout River and Herdman border crossings, as well as at Rouses Point, which is in the riding of my colleague from Saint-Jean.

[English]

Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her words on Bill C-2 today. I just wanted to bring up that back in December, under the 44th Parliament, there was an opposition day motion brought forward by the Conservative Party that listed many of the same factors we are debating here today. Some of them, as my colleague has mentioned, obviously are important to her because she is in a border riding. We had talked about getting more scanners and putting more boots on the ground. At that point in time, the Bloc, the Liberals and the NDP all voted against our opposition day motion.

I am wondering now if the member regrets that. It sounds like she is changing her mind and realizing it is important. What has been the change of heart?

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I think that I have one topic of conversation that might interest my colleague.

I am very interested in the issue of gun trafficking. A lot of guns are being smuggled into my riding from the U.S. by water. Bill C-2 would give the Canadian Coast Guard an additional patrolling mandate. What troubles me a bit about this bill is that the government seems to be planning to assign the Coast Guard this new responsi-

bility in the Arctic, but not in areas where gun trafficking is a documented issue.

I sincerely believe that we need to do more to curb gun trafficking. The Coast Guard's new responsibilities could help with that, if it is deployed to patrol sectors where gun trafficking is happening.

• (1225)

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague is someone who is really in touch with her constituents. I think that everyone in the House and everyone in her riding knows that.

I would like her to tell us how important border security is for the people in her riding. I would also like her to talk about how border security has been neglected over the past 10 years.

What would a bill that secures the border mean for the people in her riding? How can we achieve that?

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I represent a southern Quebec riding where smugglers and criminal organizations exploit and abuse migrants hoping to cross the border illegally. It cannot be said that the previous government did much to limit, control or reduce this activity.

As a member of Parliament, I have worked extensively with the RCMP to document and support residents dealing with this issue. I can also say that we helped the RCMP develop a tool that tells residents what number to call when they see something or experience—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the member. She is well over her time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, this is my first speech in the House, and I am truly pleased to see you sitting in the Speaker's chair because, as you know, you are my favourite.

As this is indeed my first speech in the House in this 45th Parliament, I would like to thank the citizens of Lac-Saint-Jean from the bottom of my heart for placing their trust in me for a third time. It is an honour to represent them in the House. That said, this would not have been possible without all the supporters, volunteers and election workers who made sure my team came out on top in this election, and I want to thank them as well. Of course, none of this would have been possible without my partner, Mylène; my son, Émile; and my daughters, Simone and Jeanne. I really want to thank them. Thanks to them, I am once again able to represent the people of Lac-Saint-Jean, this time in the 45th Parliament.

Government Orders

Let us get to the matter before us. Obviously, I will focus more on the immigration issues in this bill. It is important to note that this 130-page document, which was introduced as 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, is a complete 180. I say this because, as I am sure members will recall, over the past few years, the Liberal government has failed to manage a large number of border crises. Consider the wave of irregular immigration at Roxham Road, thriving human smuggling rings at the border that took advantage of migrants and vulnerable people, Mexican cartels setting up operations at the border, the wave of car thefts at the port of Montreal, gun trafficking and so on.

While the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-2 in principle, we will have to wait and see how all the clauses are unpacked in committee. One thing is certain, this study will be a long-term, exhaustive effort. As every observer of federal politics knows, that is precisely how the Bloc Québécois has always worked. Our method is to be thorough and meticulous, especially when dealing with bills like this one, which affects a dozen or so laws and at least three departments. Bills like this one have to be treated very seriously.

As the Bloc Québécois critic for immigration and refugees, I will focus on the items that concern immigration. Incidentally, this bill was introduced by the Minister of Public Safety, but it contains a whole section on immigration. As I was saying, we support the bill in principle, but there are still a lot of unanswered questions that we need to ask.

On its surface, the proposed legislation reflects a stricter stance on delays, irregular entries and inefficiencies in the system, but we will wait and see if anything actually changes, since the Liberal Party does not have a very good track record in that regard. The bill uses a number of rather vague expressions like “in certain circumstances”, “reasonable grounds” and “in the public interest”. That is rather broad and could mean anything. Certain provisions even raise questions about protecting the public. I am thinking in particular of the provision that states that the Refugee Protection Division cannot compel the minister or any member of his staff or person working in his office to appear for a hearing. I am very interested to hear why this was included in the bill.

As for examinations, the minister will have more power over decisions on asylum seekers. Someone will have to explain to me how, but under Bill C-2, the minister gives himself the power to further consider all asylum claims made in Canada even if officers have already made determinations on those claims. From now on, a claim will not be sent to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada until the minister has authorized it. I can hardly wait to see how all of that works out. In addition to giving himself this broad power, the minister is also giving himself the authority to prescribe by regulation the requirements for further consideration, such as the time limits for submitting documentation, control measures or the designation of a representative for minors.

On reading parts 7, 8 and 9 regarding immigration, we quickly see that the federal government wants to change its immigration laws so it can easily cancel the resident permits of certain migrants and suspend the possibility of making certain claims for staying in Canada.

• (1230)

Furthermore, if the bill is passed, asylum claims filed more than a year after a potential refugee sets foot in Canada will be deemed inadmissible for referral to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, which is normally responsible for assessing claims. The same would be true for asylum claims made after 14 days by someone in hiding within our borders. There are concerns there as well.

The Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, who is also the member for Louis-Hébert, said that this measure aims to close what was seen as a loophole in the safe third country agreement. Obviously, I remain concerned on a number of levels. In practical terms, Bill C-2 would close the loophole in the safe third country agreement, which allows a person who has illegally entered Canada to circumvent the agreement by staying in Canada for more than 14 days, but that remains to be seen. We were the ones who raised the problem related to this loophole in the safe third country agreement because of the 14-day period. What I understand today is that it will not necessarily be what we are asking for, but that there may be a way to agree on other terms. We will see what happens next.

All of the Bloc Québécois members are acting in good faith. That means that, overall, as I said, we are satisfied with the principle of the bill. We applaud the government's intention. The bill aims to address several issues that people have been raising for months, if not years. We are relieved that Bill C-2 provides for the possibility of applying for a pre-removal risk assessment for those who are ineligible to apply for asylum. At the very least, this guarantees that those individuals are protected. As a result, we will fulfill our obligations under the Geneva Convention, which I believe is very important.

Like all Quebecers, the Bloc Québécois remains firmly committed to welcoming people fleeing persecution and misery. The primary purpose of the bill is to ensure that the system for taking in migrants is fairer and more efficient. Nevertheless, there seems to be one thing missing from the government's approach. In June or July 2024, the then immigration minister announced with great fanfare that he would form a committee to ensure the fair distribution of asylum seekers throughout Canada. It was announced with great fanfare during a press conference. Since then, there has been radio silence.

The distribution of asylum seekers is one of the main concerns when it comes to Quebec's intake capacity. It is not right that half of all asylum seekers should end up in Quebec. It is not that we do not want to help them, but we have finite capacity. In the meantime, other provinces and territories are not taking on their share of the responsibility. Quebec and Ontario are doing all the work. Some provinces outright refuse to welcome asylum seekers. The government promised better distribution of asylum seekers throughout Canada.

In short, I think this is an important bill. It is a step in the right direction, but hard work and collaboration will be needed. I would like to remind my colleagues from all recognized parties in the House that the Bloc Québécois is well placed in committee to have good discussions with everyone, given that this is a minority government. Make no mistake: We will have to make some deals.

Above all, we will need to listen to the expert witnesses who will tell us what is feasible and what is not. They will tell us which clauses of the bill would stand up in court and which would not. When we examine the bill clause by clause—which we had two days to do—it raises concerns about passing the bill in its current form. The Bloc Québécois already believes there will be legal challenges. We will all need to talk to each other to ensure the bill achieves its main objective of securing the border and welcoming asylum seekers in a humane and compassionate way. We will also need to ensure that the other provinces do their part when it comes to the distribution of asylum seekers and that the minister is not granted excessive powers. At this time, the extent of the powers the minister would be granted is not very clear.

I will say it again: The Bloc Québécois is going to work very hard. We have extraordinary members. I am now ready to answer my colleague's questions.

• (1235)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-2 includes a number of measures to combat auto theft. I know that is an important issue for the Bloc Québécois. In fact, I believe that, during the last Parliament, it was the Bloc Québécois's public safety critic who got a motion adopted to have that issue taken up by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Can my colleague talk about the positive impact Bill C-2 will have on the auto theft problem we are facing across the country?

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I am clearly more focused on immigration-related issues, covered in parts 7, 8 and 9 of the bill. My colleague can correct me if I am wrong, but the bill appears useful on the issue of car theft in that it will make it easier for authorities to inspect the contents of certain containers in ports and certain shipments on trains. I think I am correct in saying that.

That is already a positive point. This is very positive, in the Bloc's opinion. That is why I am saying that we support the principle of the bill. However, we also have a number of questions, which is normal with an omnibus bill like this one. As we said, it is a 130-page bill that impacts several laws and several departments and contains a huge number of clauses. There is work to be done, but to answer my colleague's question, we are already seeing some positive points.

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[English]

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. As always, I thank all members for their interventions, including this hon. member.

The Liberals are talking a strong game about crime and things like that. I am wondering if my hon. colleague from the Bloc agrees with me that while the Liberals are talking a strong game, they have failed to take action on the issue of crime, and a lot of it has actually manifested itself in Quebec.

I am wondering if the member agrees with me that this is a little hypocritical of the Liberals and that we should not necessarily take them at their word. They had ample opportunity to do this but have done absolutely nothing over the last 10 years.

• (1240)

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, the Liberals have indeed been lax on many issues.

It is abundantly clear that border security and the immigration department have been mismanaged for the past 10 years. I believe, and I am sure everyone will agree, that the most dysfunctional department in the federal government is the immigration department. Today, we will look at what the Liberals are proposing in Bill C-2 in terms of immigration.

With regard to border security, as my colleague said earlier, the government could go ahead and take administrative steps without having to make any legislative changes. For example, the government could allow border services officers to patrol outside border services and work more closely with the RCMP.

I would also like to mention the fact that this government essentially cut in half the hours of certain border crossings that are in extremely high-risk locations in terms of gun, human and drug trafficking. Meanwhile, border officers are being prevented from doing their jobs when legislation is not even required. The government could give these officers more power tomorrow morning if it wanted to. The Liberal government has indeed been lax on these issues.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Migrant Rights Network said that this bill is anti-refugee and anti-immigrant. Does my colleague agree?

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I do not believe that this bill is anti-refugee and anti-immigrant.

Government Orders

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his enlightening speech.

Does my colleague think that Bill C-2 will improve refugee claim processing times?

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, do I have 30 minutes to answer that?

I hope that the answer to my colleague's question is yes; sadly, however, I do not know exactly how that will happen. Is improving processing times really a government objective? I am not convinced that it is.

The fact remains that it is not right for a G7 country to take four, five, six or seven years to process a refugee claim filed in-country. One of them took 12 years to process, which is crazy.

[*English*]

Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is wonderful to see you in the chair, and I just want to let you know that I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

It is with deep gratitude that I rise today on behalf of the people of Kitchener—Conestoga and give my first speech in the 45th Parliament. Standing and speaking in the chamber reinforces the responsibility that I carry as a parliamentarian and as a steward of the trust constituents have placed in me.

I want to begin by thanking everyone who helped me get here today, particularly my family. My wife Brenda, my son Satchel and my daughter Brooklyn have been supportive every step of the way.

This is the third time I have been elected to serve, and it remains an honour. I will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of all the constituents of Kitchener—Conestoga.

We are at a pivotal moment. Our communities are facing challenges in affordability, housing, climate change and global instability, but I believe, as I know my constituents do, that Canada is ready to meet this moment with courage, with compassion and with clarity of purpose.

Kitchener—Conestoga is a riding that reflects the diversity and dynamism of Canada itself. The geography of this riding includes the west end of the vibrant city of Kitchener and the three beautiful townships of Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich.

The urban-rural blend brings both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, it fosters innovation, entrepreneurship and a sense of strong community. On the other, it requires thoughtful policy that bridges the needs of urban centres, such as transit and housing, with the priorities of rural communities, such as agriculture, infrastructure and access to services.

Representing such a diverse riding means listening closely, building consensus and ensuring that no voice is left behind. The people of Kitchener—Conestoga know the power of working together. Whether it is in farmers innovating to feed our country, small businesses adapting in a changing economy or newcomers building new lives and enriching our communities, we see every day that progress is possible when we support one another. Whether

we are looking forward with innovation or reflecting on the values passed down to us that shaped us, one thing remains constant: the strength of our communities.

In Kitchener—Conestoga, that strength is rooted in a barn-raising mentality inspired by our Mennonite heritage, a spirit of co-operation, selflessness and shared purpose. I experienced that as recently as this past weekend when I attended the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale. This event is a shining example of the spirit of collaboration, where over 2,000 volunteers come together in a remarkable display of generosity and teamwork, raising funds to support relief, development and peace efforts both locally and around the world, through the Mennonite Central Committee.

It is a reminder that when we come together, we can build more than structures. We build trust, resilience and a future that reflects the best of who we are. I am encouraged by the government's commitment to building a stronger, fairer economy, one that works for everyone. Cutting taxes for the middle class, expanding dental care and protecting child care and pharmacare are not just policies. These are lifelines for families working to get ahead.

On the issue of housing, we need bold action. The creation of the "build Canada homes" program and the goal of doubling home construction are steps in the right direction, but we must work together to ensure that these homes are truly affordable and accessible to those who need them the most. That means working together with provinces, municipalities and the private sector, including skilled trades, to get shovels in the ground and roofs over heads.

I welcome the renewed focus on internal trade and labour mobility. Breaking down barriers between provinces will unlock opportunity and help us build one Canadian economy that is stronger together.

We cannot talk about strength without addressing security, because true strength means that our communities feel safe and feel supported. That is why I stand behind measures that enhance public safety, uphold the rule of law and ensure that every resident can live without fear. A strong Canada begins with secure borders. That is why our government has introduced the strong borders act, Bill C-2, legislation designed to give law enforcement the tools they need to keep Canadians safe.

This includes cracking down on transnational organized crime, stopping the flow of illegal fentanyl and strengthening our ability to combat money laundering and human trafficking. The act would enhance the powers of the Canada Border Service Agency, the RCMP and the Canadian Coast Guard to better detect and disrupt criminal activity. It would also improve the integrity of our immigration and asylum systems, ensuring that they remain fair, responsive and resilient in the face of rising global pressures.

● (1245)

This legislation is a key part of our broader plan to build a safer, more secure Canada, one where our communities are protected, our borders are respected and our laws keep pace with evolving threats. At the same time, we must also invest in prevention, mental health supports, youth programs and community initiatives that build trust.

Looking beyond our nation's borders, Canada must lead with the values that define us: equity, compassion, inclusion and co-operation. Hosting the G7 summit this month is a chance to show the world that Canada does not just talk about leadership; we live it. Whether it is providing good governance, addressing climate change or building fair trade relationships, we must lead with integrity.

I am encouraged by our government's renewed dedication to protecting our environment, our parks, waters, wildlife and farmland. It is not just about conservation; it is about identity. It is about ensuring that our children and grandchildren inherit a country as beautiful and bountiful as the one we were blessed with. We have a vision before us, but it is up to us, every member of this House, to turn that vision into reality, to listen to our constituents, to work in a non-partisan way and to never lose sight of why we are here: to serve.

Canadians have entrusted this new government with a clear and urgent mandate to build a strong economy and meet the challenges of our time with purpose and resolve. We are facing a generational moment. Rising global instability, economic uncertainty and the rapid pace of technological change demand a new approach, one that is focused, collaborative and bold.

In the short term, we must act decisively to bring down costs for Canadians, including making housing more affordable. At the same time, we must lay the foundations for long-term prosperity. That means building transformative infrastructure, modernizing our economy and ensuring Canadians have the skills and training to thrive in a rapidly changing world. It means strengthening our partnerships across provinces, with indigenous peoples and with our allies abroad.

We must proactively address global disruption caused by rising protectionism, including the recent waves of U.S. tariffs. These measures threaten Canadian businesses, workers and the very trade relationships that have underpinned our prosperity for decades. We must respond with resilience and strategy by diversifying our trade, investing in domestic capacity and standing firm in defence of fair and open markets.

In every challenge lies an opportunity. As the world navigates uncertainty, Canada has a chance to lead, not just by example but by action. We can be a beacon of stability, innovation and co-operation. Canada has the talent and the vision to shape a better world, not only for us but for everyone.

I am committed to continue being the strong voice for Kitchener—Conestoga, to serving my community with integrity and to standing up for Canada not just in words but through meaningful action every day. With humility, determination and optimism, I will continue to serve the people of Kitchener—Conestoga and work

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with all members of this House to build a Canada that is more just, more inclusive and more united for the future we all share.

I look forward to questions.

● (1250)

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is good to see you in the chair.

As this is my first time rising in this chamber, I thank the constituents of Chatham-Kent—Leamington for allowing me this opportunity.

As someone of Mennonite faith and heritage, I want to thank the member across the way for his references to the New Hamburg sale, the community and the community spirit. In fact, if someone in my community wanted a ride, I would be more than happy to give them a ride, but I, my immediate family and my extended family have joined the legions of Canadians who have experienced auto theft. In fact, we have had three vehicles stolen in the last eight months from our immediate family. My charitable spirit, I will admit, does not go quite that far.

The member referenced bold action in his speech. It has been 10 years of the Liberal government. There are promises of border enhancement and security. From where do we get the faith for that? We brought an opposition motion last fall for enhanced scanners and enhanced personnel, as was referenced in a Bloc Québécois speech. From where should Canadians get the comfort that these promises are actually serious and going to be carried out?

Tim Louis: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington. We have worked well together on the agriculture committee for years. He is just down the road from me. I appreciate the question and that he cares about the security of Canadians.

A secure Canada starts with secure borders. As far as moving fast on this bill, Bill C-2, other than the ways and means committee motion, which is Bill C-1, this is as fast as we can move. We heard a clear mandate from Canadians to make sure that we are secure and safe, and Bill C-2 is doing that.

As far as auto theft, this is going to give CBSA more of the tools it needs to combat auto theft, specifically at our ports, so I look forward to that conversation.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-2 gives CBSA officers more power to deal with fentanyl and, notably, vehicle theft. However, without additional staff, this will only solve part of the problem. On April 10, the Prime Minister promised to hire 1,000 additional officers.

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When will he finally keep his promise and follow through?

Tim Louis: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his questions, but I am not yet able to respond in French.

[English]

On the legislation, we need to work together to have that passed. We do know we need to support, both in legislation and in funding, our security, like the CBSA and RCMP. That will be in the legislation. I look forward to having that conversation. The short answer is as soon as possible, I hope.

• (1255)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, this is my first opportunity to get in on this debate.

While Canadians, obviously, are looking to the government for a policy that addresses borders, there are a lot of details in this bill. It is an omnibus bill and changes 14 different laws. I am particularly concerned about the sections that would make it impossible for people who might have had refugee status to apply for it now if they have been in Canada sometime for other, legitimate purposes. This bill would need amendments before I can vote for it.

My friend from Kitchener—Conestoga may not know the answer, but given that it is an omnibus bill, is the government prepared to split this bill so that the relevant sections are studied by committees with expertise in immigration and refugee law, and other committees that look at it from the Oceans Act perspective and so on?

Tim Louis: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that question. I would also thank her for all her service in the House.

In addressing the idea about splitting the bill, I would have to talk with the House leaders and have that conversation. I am not sure.

The bill is extensive because we need to protect Canadians. We need to make sure we are doing it in a way that gives law enforcement the tools it needs and, at the same time, protects Canadians' privacy. In the early days, we are going to have more discussions about this and more readings, and I look forward to the discussion.

Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have heard from many police services, police associations and chiefs of police. The number one thing that Canada needs is bail reform. This bill is talking about trying to make Canada safer, but there is nothing in here about bail reform.

Can the member comment on why we are not giving the police associations and the police chiefs what they are really asking for?

Tim Louis: Madam Speaker, it is difficult to say the bill is too big and not big enough at the same time. The Liberals are trying to strike that balance. I believe we need to work on legislation that addresses what we said we would do, which is sentence reform as well as bail reform.

Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with deep humility, great hope and unwavering dedication that I rise today as the voice of the residents of Mississauga East—Cooksville. I wish to begin by offering my sincere congratu-

lations to you, Madam Speaker; it is great to see you in the chair again.

I congratulate all members in the House on their election and re-election. Each of us brings a distinct voice and unique experiences here. While we may sit on different sides of the aisle, we are united by a shared commitment to serve the people who entrusted us to be here and to do all we can to make their lives that much better.

Above all, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the people of Mississauga East—Cooksville for placing their trust in me to be their representative here in the House. I thank them for opening their doors, sharing their stories and touching me deeply. It is their ideas, their concerns, their dreams for a better future that shape everything I do in this chamber.

I thank my family, my loving wife Christina and our twin boys Sebastien and Alexander, for their unconditional support and love. I thank the volunteers who gave their time, energy and hearts to our campaign. They made this possible, and this moment belongs to them as much as it does to me. I am thankful to my office team for providing the constituents of Mississauga East—Cooksville with great care, respect and service that is second to none.

The world we live in today feels more uncertain than ever. It is fast-moving, more fragile and at times deeply unsettling. Families are feeling the weight of rising prices, struggling to keep up with the cost of living, while at the same time worrying about the safety of their neighbourhoods and the stability of our country. From unpredictable global conflicts and inflationary pressures to U.S. tariffs and threats on our national security, these challenges are not abstract. They are real. They touch the lives of everyday Canadians.

In moments like this, people need to know their leaders are listening, that we understand their fears, that we are working every day to protect their future. With every challenge comes an opportunity, an opportunity to lead with clarity, to act with compassion, to build a future where no one is left behind. Mississauga East—Cooksville, like many communities across Canada, is feeling the weight of these challenges.

A safe Canada is a strong Canada, and that strength starts with ensuring that those who would do harm are stopped in their tracks. From cracking down on organized crime and money laundering to protecting our borders and modernizing our law enforcement tools, we are defending the integrity of our communities and our economy alike, because national security and economic security go hand in hand. When Canadians feel safe, businesses thrive, investments grow and opportunity flourishes. That is why our plan to build a more prosperous Canada begins with a clear-eyed commitment to the safety and security of our communities.

Earlier this week we had the opportunity to witness a moment that reminded me why I believe so deeply in our great country. This week in Saskatchewan, the Prime Minister and premiers from across Canada came together to focus on building and protecting our nation together. They gathered not just to talk but to act, to move forward on nation-building projects that will use the best of what Canada has to offer.

From the steel forged in Hamilton to clean energy solutions from Alberta and advanced manufacturing right in my community of Mississauga East—Cooksville, Ontario, this is a plan that harnesses our full potential as a country. It is about connecting regions, strengthening our economy and creating good jobs in every province and territory. It is about making sure that when Canada builds, we build together.

Even as this important work took place, Saskatchewan was battling devastating wildfires. Families were displaced, communities were under threat, and what we saw was solidarity among our country. We saw our first responders there to help, putting themselves on the line, protecting the lives and livelihoods of so many.

● (1300)

What I saw in Saskatchewan was the very best of our federation: leaders setting aside differences to serve Canadians, a commitment to co-operation that transcends partisanship and a belief that a stronger Canada is not built in isolation but by bringing people and provinces together. When we look out for one another, when we invest in each other, when we build not just for today but for generations to come, Canada is at its strongest.

We will eliminate internal trade barriers that stifle innovation and cost our economy billions each year. In doing so, we will create one strong Canadian economy from 13, driving prosperity in every corner of this great nation.

For this economic prosperity to take root, people must not only feel safe in their local communities, but also feel confident that their country is secure from external threats. Local safety encourages investment, job creation and community development, while national security protects our borders, critical infrastructure and trade routes. When both internal and external threats are effectively addressed, it creates a stable environment where businesses can thrive and families can plan for the future.

In this way, safety and security at home and across our borders are essential pillars of a strong and resilient economy. Security begins at home, and today, Canadians are feeling a growing unease. In our neighbourhoods, families are increasingly concerned about rising crime, particularly auto thefts, home invasions, drug trafficking and repeat violent offences.

In Mississauga East—Cooksville and across the country, we have heard these concerns loud and clear. This is not just about numbers in a report; it is about really investing in our communities and making sure we can provide peace of mind to our citizens.

That is why our new government is taking bold, concrete action to strengthen community safety from every angle.

We will hire 1,000 additional RCMP officers and 1,000 additional Canada Border Services Agency officers. We are going to reform

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the Criminal Code to make it more difficult for repeat violent offenders to be released on bail, ensuring that dangerous individuals are not returned to our streets prematurely.

At our ports and borders, we are expanding the tools available to the Canada Border Services Agency to intercept illegal goods before they reach our communities, especially the deadly flow of fentanyl precursors and the increasing number of stolen vehicles linked to crime and smuggling rings.

We are going further. Through the strong borders act, we are targeting transnational crime and money laundering, modernizing our immigration system to prevent fraud, and empowering our Coast Guard to protect Canadian sovereignty and disrupt criminal activity at sea.

Before I speak about the importance of safety and security, I must first speak from the heart about something that shook me and those around me to the core: the arson attack on my constituency office. This was not just an attack on a building; it was an attack on the very spirit of democracy, on the belief that we settle our differences through dialogue, not violence and destruction.

I want to sincerely thank our first responders for their quick and courageous actions. I am also deeply grateful to the people of Mississauga East—Cooksville, who reached out with compassion, stood in solidarity and reminded me of the strength and kindness that define our community.

I want to thank my staff, who experienced this trauma first-hand, for their unwavering commitment to public service, their grace and their strength, even in the face of this senseless and malicious act.

Safety and security in our communities and for our country are paramount. Let us be clear: Safety is not a partisan issue. Safety is about ensuring that all of us are able to live safe and secure at home, in the workplace, on the streets and in our democratic institutions. We are all stronger for it. We are Canada strong.

● (1305)

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

First, I wish to denounce what happened at my colleague's office, which he referred to. That is unacceptable for anyone in Canada to experience.

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Where I take issue with my colleague's speech is that it is straight out of the Liberal playbook of saying, "We're going to, we're going to, we're going to." Like me, my colleague was here for that, and he may have even been here before I got here. The Liberals say they are going to do all these things on crime. They mocked us for all of these proposals and now are flip-flopping.

How can we have any faith whatsoever that the Liberals are going to take action when they have said that they will not and in fact had ideological opposition? It is largely the same group of Liberals over there.

Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague and all those in the House, because just earlier today, we saw every member united in the vote on the ways and means motion. I cannot recall the last time that happened, but the Liberals, the Conservatives, the Bloc, the NDP and the Greens, everybody, got up, and that is how we have to approach this.

This transcends all political stripes. It is about keeping our communities safe. The member brings up different points, but I hope the member will be supporting this legislation. He should know, and I believe does know and understand, how important it is to law enforcement and how important it is to his citizens and my citizens to make sure they feel safe in their communities and homes and that we have a safer country.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, the bill gives new powers to border services officers, but those already on the ground are overwhelmed. The union even says that they are short 2,000 to 3,000 officers.

Let us start with the Prime Minister's promise. On April 10 during the election campaign, he promised 1,000.

Can my colleague tell me how many new officers have been hired since then? If the answer is zero, when will they start hiring to secure our borders?

[English]

Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for the opportunity to thank our Canada Border Services Agency and all of the officers. They do a commendable job. That is why our government has committed to 1,000 more Canada Border Services Agency agents, even though we already added 1,000 to our border prior to this. This is a historic investment of \$1.3 billion, which has never been done before in Canada. We already have a strong border, but this will strengthen and reinforce it. It is the right thing to do.

I hope the member will vote in favour of this legislation, because it will do exactly what he is asking for.

• (1310)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to pass on my compliments for your appointment as Assistant Deputy Speaker. It is wonderful to see you in the chair.

I cannot speak without referencing the departmental plans. If I look back as far as 2019, when Ralph Goodale was in this place, and the plans from 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, every single one of them mentions cracking down on fentanyl. One of them,

from about four years ago, actually talks about bringing in legislation to ban precursors.

Since the 2019 departmental plan came out, 41,000 Canadians have died from the fentanyl scourge, yet every year we hear the same thing: "We're going to do something, we're going to do something, we're going to do something." However, nothing has been done.

Why would Canadians believe the government is actually going to do something when its own plans and papers for five or six years have been saying it is going to do something but it has done nothing?

Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the hon. colleague across the aisle, but he would know that when his party was in government, it was cutting services at our borders. It was looking at trimming everywhere, taking away those opportunities. The precursors change regularly. That is why we need to stay on top of them.

I know my colleague will look for what is in the best interest of his residents and his constituents. What is in their best interest is to vote in favour of this legislation to make sure that it passes through this House so we can bring in more measures to keep our communities safe and secure.

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I echo the comments that have been made welcoming you back to the chair.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise to speak to this important piece of legislation, 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. Finally, after a decade of inaction and repeated failures, the Liberals have tabled a so-called strong borders act, which gives the appearance of taking border security more seriously. However, the fact is that this legislation is packed with measures that Canadians did not ask for. It is a travesty that the government has allowed so many problems to fester for so long and cause so much damage to Canadians.

This sweeping piece of legislation, which the government claims will strengthen our border, protect Canada's sovereignty and keep Canadians safe, amends the following acts: the Customs Act; the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, to add fentanyl to schedule V; the Canada Post Corporation Act; the Oceans Act; the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act; the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act; the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Act; and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act. It also introduces the supporting authorized access to information act, which is one to pay attention to.

For years, the Liberals, knowing we had severe problems at our border with the United States, dragged their feet on addressing any of the issues. In fact, they even lashed out at law-abiding Canadians when they raised concerns about the rise in gun crimes under the Liberal government in the hopes that the Liberals would crack down on criminals and illegal firearms. Instead, the government started targeting law-abiding firearms owners and treated them as if they were dangerous criminals who needed to be dealt with. We all knew that illegal firearms being smuggled across the border to be used by street gangs were what needed to be dealt with. The government needed to stop illegal firearms from crossing the border so they could not be used to rob, injure or kill Canadians.

What did the Liberals do instead? Old habits die hard. The government doubled down on hunters and sport shooters. Sport shooters are now often turned around at the border, and even if they go through the exhaustive paperwork, jumping through all the hoops, they often have equipment wrongfully seized, which takes them months to get back. In the meantime, illegal firearms stream across the border, where CBSA agents, already understaffed, are stretched thin trying to slow the flow.

After a decade of Liberal governance, gun-related crime is up 116%, and 85% of gun offences are committed using illegal firearms from the United States. Canadian security services have also identified 350 organized crime rings operating within our borders, 63 of which have international connections to China, Mexico and other nations.

The Conservatives would like to see the Liberals scrap their failed gun buyback program, which, over four years and \$67 million later, has failed to get a single gun off the streets, and redirect this money into stopping illegal firearms from entering the country. That way, the government can target criminals rather than law-abiding Canadians.

After years of the CBSA and Conservatives calling for more resources at the border to combat the multitude of trafficking that occurs, the government had another bright idea: It purchased two Black Hawk helicopters to patrol the border and stop smugglers. On the surface, the purchase of new equipment seems good, but in practical terms, it was another Liberal nothingburger. Our border with the United States is just under 8,900 kilometres. Having two helicopters to cover that large of a distance, even if they are both working at the same time, is a ludicrous proposition. Instead of hiring more CBSA agents to help staunch the flow of illegal firearms and drugs, the Liberals have spent millions of dollars to lease these helicopter for a few months.

• (1315)

The work of our border agents has been continually hampered by the Liberal government, as it has refused to recognize where and what the problems are. The government has been asked repeatedly by border agents, their unions and other Canadians with common sense to give more resources to the CBSA so it can properly staff border crossings and deal with the crime at the border.

While the Liberals would have us believe that there is finally some movement on addressing the serious issues at the border, we must remember that most of the issues were created or exacerbated by 10 years of Liberal incompetence and inaction. The reality is

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that the Liberals, with the help of their NDP partner, lost control of the border and scrambled to act only when warnings from another country came calling for them to fix their disastrous broken border policy.

As I mentioned earlier, the bill is sweeping legislation. I note that the Liberals have adopted some of the Conservative stance to strengthen border security and crack down on criminals. The government has promised that it will invest \$300 million in border investigation and scanners; this is welcome news. Conservatives have been calling, for years, for more resources for our agents at the border to stem the flow of illegal firearms and drugs.

Only 1% of shipping containers are inspected coming into our country, allowing drugs and guns to sneak through in the other 99%. However, true to form, the government has offered no timeline for when the investment would be made and the resources would reach the border. The Liberal track record of making funding announcements and then sitting back and assuming someone else is going to do the job has shown a lack of transparency and trustworthiness. This brings into question the government's ability to execute on this promise.

Additionally, the past 10 years have shown that the Liberals always find a way to make funding commitments work best for their friends and Liberal insiders. We only need to look back at what happened during COVID, when the Liberal government handed a \$237-million contract to its former MP, colleague, and future leadership candidate, Frank Baylis. While that was an obvious conflict of interest, the Liberals pressed on with the contract for ventilators, claiming they were necessary. Then, just a few years later, it quietly came to light that the government had sold the ventilators for pennies on the dollar for scrap. However, it did not matter, because yet another Liberal insider got to pad his pockets.

Another example is the arrive scam scandal. The Liberals seized the opportunity of a crisis to spend at least \$60 million on a simple app. After a study at committee and reviews by the procurement ombudsman and the Auditor General, it was clear that the government had funnelled money to fraudulent consultants with no care as to how much it was spending. Last, I want to point to the example of McKinsey, a company that got special access to government contracts because its managing partner at the time, Dominic Barton, was personal friends with Justin Trudeau. McKinsey made \$100 million from that relationship, which, again, was found by the Auditor General to be improper. This is why it is so difficult to take the government at its word.

Each one of these procurements was justified as necessary by the government at the time, and each one was plagued by corruption and incompetence.

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If we fast-forward to today, the government is promising to spend \$300 million on a large procurement project in the midst of a crisis, and I have huge reservations about trusting its judgment when it comes to who those millions of dollars will go to. Will it be another former Liberal MP? Will it be another friend of the prime minister? We have seen the reports that Brookfield firms reached out to the Prime Minister just days after he took office. Will one of these firms receive contracts for the new border initiative?

● (1320)

Another issue with large procurements is that we know that the Prime Minister has financial holdings in companies that he has failed to disclose to Canadians, so it is possible that when these initiatives cross his desk, there may be certain companies that will be looked upon more favourably. Without knowing which companies the Prime Minister has a financial interest in, it is difficult to scrutinize the government spending that he approves. That is why I hope the Prime Minister will disclose his assets sooner rather than later so Canadians can hold his government to account for any favouritism that may be shown in the procurement process.

Along with the bill, we need to see movement on bail and sentencing reform. Many of the issues at the border originate in our cities. Over the past 10 years, there has been a drastic increase in crime across the country. The fentanyl crisis has found a home here in Canada under the Liberal government. Fentanyl superlabs are being set up to ship the deadly drug across Canada and abroad. These superlabs have flourished under the Liberals' watch.

Over the past nine years, over 49,000 Canadians have died from opioid overdose. Despite this number, the Prime Minister has claimed that it is not a crisis but just a challenge. This crisis needs to be addressed, both at the border and in our cities, to combat the flow of fentanyl and its ingredients, which are coming primarily from China and Mexico. By stemming the flow of the ingredients at the border, we can alleviate some of the pressure on our police forces across the country, which are dealing with this crisis.

While measures for the border are needed to crack down on the smuggling of illegal firearms and drugs, we also need to address the issue that is stretching our police forces thin: easy-to-get-bail laws. In 2022, 256 people were killed by someone out on bail. This constitutes 29% of all homicides committed that year. Liberal catch-and-release policies have devastated communities across Canada. We are in desperate need of bail reform, which Conservatives have been calling for for years.

Recently, the Liberals finally admitted their mistake and have agreed that the Conservative push for bail reform is the only way forward. In the throne speech, the Liberals stated, "The Government will bring a renewed focus on car theft and home invasions by toughening the Criminal Code to make bail harder to get for repeat offenders charged with committing these crimes, along with human trafficking and drug smuggling."

While we have numerous examples of the Liberals' plagiarizing the Conservative platform, one measure that we would encourage them to undertake is adopting our position on bail reform. The past 10 years of soft-on-crime policies and easy bail for violent repeat offenders has caused untold misery across Canada. While it cannot undo the past 10 years of tragedies, the government can alleviate

some of the pressure on our police forces by making bail more difficult to get for repeat violent offenders. By keeping these criminals in jail rather than letting them back out onto the street within hours of their arrest, our police would be able to better serve their communities since they would not keep getting calls to deal with the same offenders.

Repeat violent offenders deserve jail, not bail. It is time the Liberals put victims first instead of the criminals who victimized them. I look forward to the day when the government adopts and implements more Conservative policies regarding crime so Canadians can once again live on safe streets and in safe communities.

There are already concerns around privacy being raised regarding the bill. It is always a concern for Canadians when the government asks for sweeping new powers in a large omnibus bill, particularly powers that deal with their privacy and appear to infringe on it. One area that has raised concerns is the section of the bill which would amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

By planning to broaden the ability of the government to open mail, outside the current restrictions held within the Canada Post Corporation Act, the Customs Act, and the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, the government is causing deep concern and anxiety among Canadians about their privacy. The government must ensure that strict rules remain in place and must provide a more comprehensive response as to when this would be justifiable. As my colleague asked earlier today, is this charter-compliant?

● (1325)

Additionally, part 14 of the bill, which would amend the Criminal Code to allow access to basic information from public service providers, would permit peace officers to access certain data without a warrant, and it would relax warrant requirements and streamline data collection. This has come under serious scrutiny as experts have raised concerns about the impact on the privacy of Canadians that it would have. The government must continue its consultations on privacy issues that are being raised with the bill to ensure that innocent Canadians do not have their privacy breached.

I look forward to more robust debate on the bill and to the committee study that will follow. We all know that Canadians are counting on us in this place to make the changes needed to secure our border. After 10 years of mismanagement and a porous border, it is time for the government to reverse its disastrous policies. It is time for it to take border security seriously. Conservatives ran on a promise to secure the border, and we are prepared to support tougher measures, especially those that address the myriad issues created by the past decade of Liberal failures.

As I said, I do look forward to the rest of the debate on the bill, and I look forward to when the bill is referred to committee and the committee undertakes a comprehensive review of the study to see what amendments may come forward in order to address the gaps that often accompany a bill introduced by the government.

● (1330)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know that the member cares deeply about this issue. I hope she will support the piece of legislation, as it has been endorsed by many of our policing agencies as being important legislation.

One organization I would like to mention in particular is the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. It has stated that the “proposed changes by the federal government...would reduce barriers Canadian police face when investigating the growing number of online crimes against children”. We have the full support of that organization, which has stated, and as we know today, that cyber-crimes have evolved at a pace that government has not been able to keep up with.

I wonder whether the member would agree with that, whether she finds that subscriber information and data privacy issues are really important, and whether it is really important to make these changes so we can keep up with the criminals.

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, while I do not live in a border community, I know that the issues that stem from not having a secure border are far-reaching across our country. There are myriad issues that need to be addressed. As I stated in my speech, the bill would amend nine acts and introduce a new one. It is a large omnibus bill with many different aspects that would have knock-on effects. As always, the devil is in the details.

It is important that we have a robust debate and study the bill intensely at the proper committee. Concerns have been raised about the bill, and I am sure will continue to be raised as more people are consulted and review the legislation. I look forward to hearing what the results of those consultations are.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I salute my colleague and congratulate her on her re-election.

Under the Harper government, there were plans to cut the number of officers at the border. That is what it says in CBSA's 2015 report on plans and priorities. Now that the Conservative Party is in opposition, it seems to have taken the opposite position. They agree that we need more staff to have more security at the borders.

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I would like my colleague to simply explain to me why it was a priority to reduce staff when the Conservative Party was in government, but now that they are in opposition, they agree with increasing staff.

[English]

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I disagree with the premise of that question. Conservatives have always been concerned with security at our border. We have long been calling for decisive action to protect Canada's borders, and we continue to do so.

The government has been in government for 10 years, and it took 10 years for it to introduce this piece of legislation. We know that it is coming at the eleventh hour and that time is of the essence in order to get the legislation through the House and potentially passed.

I do understand that the Liberals would like this to happen quickly, but we are not going to rush this. We are going to take the time to look at the legislation to make sure that it addresses all the issues that need to be addressed. It will get the scrutiny it deserves.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the election was on April 28. We have a new Prime Minister and a new government. This is bill number two, the very first piece of legislation.

Now, if the member wants to reflect on past governments, I remember that it was Stephen Harper who actually cut hundreds of millions of dollars for border control, not to mention the border control officers who were cut from the system. She was a part of that government. The bill before us would do the absolute opposite of what Stephen Harper did, and she knows that.

My question is very simple: Will the member join with the Canadian Police Association, which represents thousands of law enforcement officers on the street today who are in support of the legislation? Will the Conservative Party support the legislation today and see it go to committee sooner as opposed to later?

● (1335)

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, there it is: exactly what I said in response to the previous question.

The Liberals want us to believe that they are new, a new Prime Minister and new government, but they are not. They have been in power for 10 years and did nothing to address the issues regarding border security. They keep hearkening back to a decade ago. They have had a decade to do what needed to be done, to do what Canadians have been calling on them to do.

As I have stated, I know the Liberals want to ram the legislation through. As in many cases in the past, the imperative is created, and we have to get it done because they did not get it done over the last 10 years.

Government Orders

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

Before I begin, I want to recognize a young man named Jasper Phillips, who recently received the Chief Scout's Award for fundraising for robotics kits of over \$1,000. We thank him for his service.

I always really enjoy speaking with my hon. colleague. I was just looking at a report from Staff Sergeant Josh Roda of the Merritt RCMP, a community of 7,000. Staff Sergeant Roda reported that the Merritt RCMP have already seized 69 firearms this year, two just this last month, with one being a sawed-off shotgun. This is what we need to address, in my view. The bill would do none of that. Would my hon. colleague agree?

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has been very instrumental in reviewing this piece of legislation, and I absolutely agree with his observations. We have heard more stories like the one he just cited for us in this place. The government needs to ensure that the legislation is going to be robust, and, as opposition, we are going to do the same in addressing the concerns that he just cited.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is really troubling to me that the Liberal government is trying to push through an omnibus bill of over 120 pages. I am wondering if the member agrees with me that perhaps we need to push the government to ensure that we can look at the legislation separately and get it out of an omnibus bill.

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I do agree with my colleague.

Despite the title of the bill, as I mentioned in my speech, it would go beyond its stated aim to secure our borders. It is a sweeping piece of legislation that stretches far beyond immigration, national security and securing our borders, and I do think it is an attempt to use the guise of border security to push through other unrelated measures and that the Liberals are hoping Canadians are not paying attention.

I would suggest that, as consultations are undertaken when the bill is referred to committee, each member of that committee, and certainly the opposition, should be calling for time to review this piece of legislation, every piece of it, in order to make sure that it addresses the concerns for which it is intended.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I give my question, I want to put something to rest, I hope once and for all.

We have heard the member for Winnipeg North and others repeat the same false narrative about everything being okay that they have not done in the last 10 years because of Harper's cuts. I would like him, the Liberals and everyone in this House to take a look at the public accounts. These are non-partisan numbers put forward by the government. These are real numbers on spending.

Adjusted for Liberal inflation, the Liberals are actually spending \$200 million less on CBSA than when they took over, so the government should actually end that false narrative, stop misinforming Canadians and actually start spouting the truth about what is going on at the border.

I wonder if my colleague could answer this: Why does she think the government is pushing a false narrative instead of answering important questions today on this debate about the border bill?

● (1340)

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the attention that the member pays to the financial reports. I know that numbers do not lie, and I agree with him that it is time the Liberals came clean and admitted to their failures of the last 10 years.

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime.

During the election campaign, Canadians across the country asked us to take concrete measures to build a safer Canada. We have heard them, and we take the issues of protecting our borders and cracking down on crime very seriously. That is why, at the beginning of this new Parliament, we introduced Bill C-2, the strong borders act.

I would like to congratulate my colleague, the Minister of Public Safety, who sponsored this bill, as well as all my other ministerial colleagues who contributed to it, for the quality of their work on this important issue for Canadians. Over the next few minutes, I will explain why I support this essential bill, which will enable us to advance our government's priorities of keeping Canadians safe by strengthening Canada's border, fighting transnational organized crime and improving the integrity of Canada's immigration system.

The first objective of this bill is to make our border more secure. This is an especially important issue for me as the member for Madawaska—Restigouche, a riding with five border crossings. I want to point out that Canada's borders are already strong and secure and that CBSA staff do remarkable work. I want to commend them for the work they do every day to protect our borders. During the election campaign, I had the opportunity to meet many of these border services officers at various community activities in my riding and discuss their important work with them. Through Bill C-2, we will make our borders even stronger. We will do that by making it easier for border officers to examine goods destined for export that are crossing the border and to intercept more drugs, guns and stolen vehicles as they leave Canada. For example, border officers will have more power to inspect containers destined for export and prevent car theft rings from smuggling stolen vehicles out of the country. During the election campaign, I heard many stories about stolen vehicles, like that of a young entrepreneurial couple from my riding, who work hard to earn a living and who, upon returning from vacation, found that their truck had disappeared from their hotel's long-term parking lot. We need to increase the responsible authorities' capacity to fight this type of crime. It is also important to understand that the strong borders act complements our other measures to strengthen our borders. Once passed, this legislation will strengthen Canada's border plan, which involves funding of \$1.3 billion, the largest investment in border security in Canadian history. When we talk about strengthening our country's security, it is not just talk. We are taking real action.

We are also taking important steps to preserve the integrity of our immigration system while honouring our humanitarian commitments. Canadians expect us to maintain a strong, effective immigration system well suited to present conditions. That is why we made changes to create two ineligibility measures in the asylum system. The goal is to reduce pressure on the system and deter those who may seek to abuse it. Let me reiterate, however, that we will do this while upholding our humanitarian traditions and ensuring that refugees who genuinely need protection can get it.

The second objective of Bill C-2 is to combat transnational organized crime and fentanyl. We understand that a strong Canada requires strong crime prevention measures. That is why we are taking steps to prevent crime, give police the tools they need to fight it, and hold criminals accountable for their actions. Opioids are wreaking havoc across the country. Thousands of lives are being lost; not a day goes by without hearing heartbreaking stories of lives cut short. We cannot remain indifferent to this situation, and we must act. That is why we will continue our efforts to stop the flow of fentanyl. In particular, we will further empower law enforcement agencies in the fight against the production and trafficking of illicit drugs. We will allow law enforcement agencies to search goods crossing the border. We will facilitate the listing of precursor chemicals in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to prevent their importation and illegal use. We will also allow the police to search for, intercept and seize drugs and other prohibited items that are being shipped through the postal system. To that end, we will amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

Government Orders

• (1345)

This bill will also strengthen our ability to prosecute transnational child sex offenders. To do this, we are amending the Sex Offender Information Registration Act to improve the RCMP's ability to share information with its national and international partners.

The third pillar of our bill is to stop illicit financing by strengthening our ability to fight money laundering and stop the flow of financial proceeds from organized crime to deprive it of its illegal profits.

Our government was elected on a platform of protecting and defending Canadians from foreign threats, which includes protecting our financial system. We will therefore impose tougher penalties for financial crimes. We will also facilitate the exchange of information between Canada's largest banks and law enforcement agencies responsible for combatting money laundering, so that banks can receive and use the information sent to them by the RCMP.

As such, Bill C-2 is an important step forward in implementing our plan to build a safer Canada. This bill strengthens law enforcement's ability to detect and investigate serious crimes, while respecting the rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the rule of law. It is important to stress that the amendments we are proposing have been carefully crafted to balance privacy interests with the tools law enforcement needs to fulfill their mandate.

By implementing these rigorous measures, the Government of Canada will strengthen security at our borders while increasing safety in our communities. These measures will also show our international partners that Canada takes seriously our shared responsibility to combat fentanyl, car theft, human trafficking and transnational organized crime.

In conclusion, protecting our borders and fighting crime and illicit financing are issues that transcend party lines. Canadians have high expectations of us. They expect us to work together with the seriousness that the issues we are addressing demand.

Like all my colleagues on the government side, I will support this important bill. I hope that all other members of the House will work with us constructively to pass this bill, which is essential to making Canada stronger, safer and more secure.

Government Orders

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I do not think I have had a chance to congratulate you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker. As my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean said earlier, I am happy to see you again. You are my favourite too, so it is good to see you again.

I was also pleased to hear our new colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche say that he will support Bill C-2. I am glad to hear that. However, I would add that, since this is a government bill, I would imagine that he does not really have a choice in the matter.

That said, I appreciated his passion, and I congratulate him on his speech, but there is something in the bill that concerns me.

I am talking about respect for privacy and people's information. The bill proposes allowing Canada Post, among other entities, to inspect mail and packages sent to citizens. I understand the objective and I agree with it.

However, how does my colleague intend to respond to the concerns of citizens who will be surprised by the fact that the government wants to open their mail and monitor their parcels? I get the feeling that there will be an outcry at some point.

I would like to know whether the Liberals are anticipating such an outcry. How are they going to respond to it, and how are they going to reassure people in that regard?

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, I am proud to support this bill. It will implement strict measures to strengthen security at our borders while making our communities safer.

To be clear, these amendments have been carefully crafted to strike a balance between privacy concerns and the tools that law enforcement needs to carry out its mandate.

The bill strengthens law enforcement's ability to detect and investigate serious crimes, while upholding the rule of law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We can strengthen our border security and fight crime while respecting the fundamental rights of our citizens.

As a government, we are committed to building a safer and more secure Canada. That is what we are doing.

• (1350)

[English]

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, one of the things I am concerned about is this. It is great to know that we are hiring more law enforcement officials, but has the government read the Mass Casualty Commission report on the Portapique shootings and the quite substantial recommendations that RCMP officers need more extensive and better training that lasts years?

Are we going to see the implementation of the Mass Casualty Commission report recommendations before hiring more RCMP officers, who will, according to the Mass Casualty Commission, lack the training to save lives?

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important question.

In the recent election campaign, Canadians asked us to bring in measures to strengthen security in Canada and fight crime. That is what we are doing. To demonstrate how seriously we are taking this matter, in the first weeks of this Parliament, we introduced Bill C-2, which includes several strong measures to strengthen our border and fight crime here at home. This is a first step.

Our election platform and the Speech from the Throne both include a number of other measures to fight crime and keep Canadians safe.

This is a first step, and I would say that it is a big step forward in our plan to make Canada an even safer and more secure country.

[English]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very happy that someone brought up the issue of the casualty report. One of the items, specifically, was a lack of heavy body armour. We had an Order Paper question come back just recently, about a year ago, which was 10 years after the mass casualty issue, where the government has still not provided heavy body armour to the RCMP.

The government is repeatedly saying that it is going to add 1,000 RCMP officers, but there is no commitment to provide the heavy body armour, even for the existing ones. The government has not provided the heavy body armour to existing, much less additional, ones. In fact, it does not even know how much heavy body armour is available, because it has to put out an RFP, apparently, to hire a consultant to count how many items it has for the heavy body armour.

I wonder if my colleague across the way would commit, to the House, to talk to the minister to ensure that the RCMP officers are provided with the heavy body armour they require.

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, as I said, Bill C-2 is an ambitious bill containing several crime-fighting measures. We want to give our law enforcement agencies more flexible tools so they can take effective action to combat crime in our communities and make Canada safer and more secure.

That means we will introduce more concrete measures. For example, the Liberal platform includes more resources for the RCMP. It is a commitment to make Canada stronger and safer.

[English]

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, now that I am not as crunched for time as I am in question period or at other opportunities, I would like to congratulate you on your reappointment as Assistant Deputy Speaker.

I also want to thank the constituents of Brampton North—Caledon for electing me for a fourth mandate. I am committed to making sure that their voices are heard and that the issues they brought up to me during the election and in years prior are worked on effectively and efficiently. I want to thank my campaign team and my family at home, who have always supported me completely.

I will now start my remarks on Bill C-2, the bill we are talking about today. This is a wonderful opportunity, and it allows me to fulfill some of the commitments I have made to my constituents. As the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime, I am really proud to play a role in supporting this government's initiative to keep Canada and our communities safe and secure.

In April, Canadians gave this House a mandate to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians. Our country has professional, highly trained and hard-working security personnel. However, it is clear that the current tools and policies are insufficient to effectively counter the modern and emerging threats and challenges we face today.

Now is the time for action. We must do more to equip our law enforcement and intelligence agencies with the latest tools and technologies, do more to stop transnational organized crime from damaging communities and destroying lives with illegal guns and weapons, and do more to enable collaboration and information sharing among our security agencies, law enforcement partners and international allies.

Bill C-2 is a crucial legislative step we must take to secure our border, support law enforcement and improve community safety. This government's top priority is to keep our communities safe and our economy thriving. Both of these objectives depend upon decisive measures to combat crime and keep our border safe and secure. The effects of improving our border security will be felt in cities and towns across Canada. By giving border officers the authority to search goods for export, we are ensuring they have additional tools to recover stolen vehicles and seize illegal firearms and drugs.

This legislation is building on the Government of Canada's \$1.3-billion investment in border security through our Canada border plan. This spending is helping our law enforcement and intelligence agencies investigate and prosecute transnational organized crime groups, which have become increasingly more sophisticated in their use of new technologies like drones, 3-D printers and encrypted communications to carry out cross-border crimes.

We cannot have a strong border without good intelligence. The border plan has built up our information and intelligence-sharing capacity among federal, provincial and territorial authorities, as well as with our international partners. Investment in drones, helicopters, sensors and other detection technologies ensures that we are effectively monitoring our whole border.

Government Orders

We will continue to work with Canada's fentanyl czar to coordinate all levels of government and law enforcement to dismantle these networks. To support that aim, we have taken a major step in the fight against organized crime by listing seven transnational criminal cartels as terrorist entities under our Criminal Code. Listing is an important tool that helps support criminal investigations and strengthens the RCMP's ability to prevent, disrupt and prosecute criminal activities.

It is now time to take our efforts further through legislation. Bill C-2 would improve the tools and authorities that Canadian law enforcement needs to fight crime. For instance, communities across Canada have been shocked by the increase in deaths caused by illegal fentanyl. Fentanyl's devastating effect can be felt on individuals, families and communities. Every member of this House knows someone who has been affected by this public health crisis. Through this proposed act, our work to secure the border, we are tackling the fentanyl crisis and its precursors head-on. To increase our detection capabilities, we are training and deploying new border detector dogs that specialize in uncovering smuggled drugs.

● (1355)

Amendments to the Canada Post Corporation Act would allow police to search and seize contraband such as fentanyl from Canada Post mail with a general warrant. This change would help indigenous communities and rural municipalities in their efforts to intercept dangerous illegal drugs that are clandestinely shipped through the mail.

Canada recently demonstrated it can move quickly to ban precursor chemicals used in the production of fentanyl via the temporary accelerated scheduling pathway under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Bill C-2 proposes amendments that would allow chemicals in this pathway to quickly be regulated under the precursor control regulations.

It is clear that we must strengthen our laws to disrupt the supply of illegal drugs both within Canada and around the world. This important step would give the government and law enforcement the ability to stay ahead of those who would profit from fentanyl production and distribution.

Statements by Members

Furthermore, we are creating a new Canadian drug analysis centre that would allow for a more specialized analysis of synthetic drug samples. This centre would be able to go beyond simply identifying the components of a sample and would instead look at markets to determine how and where the substances were manufactured. Knowing that transnational organized crime groups depend on illicit money to keep their operations going—

• (1400)

The Speaker: The hon. secretary of state will have three and a half minutes left after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

WILDFIRES IN MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after being elected as the member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre for the third time, I rise to express my sincere gratitude to my family, my campaign team, our Winnipeg Centre team and all those who gave me their support this election. Regardless of whether they voted for me, I am committed to working to gain their trust and to doing my best to be their voice in Ottawa. I will waste no time ensuring that our community receives the attention it deserves.

Today is World Environment Day, yet our province is in a state of emergency due to wildfires, which are becoming the new normal. We must act to address this climate emergency. I uplift all frontline workers risking their lives, leaders advocating on behalf of their communities, community members taking evacuees into their homes, indigenous rights holders, and climate leaders who refuse to sit back and let the planet burn, including one we are joined by today, Dr. David Suzuki.

* * *

NEWTON TENNIS CLUB

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Newton Tennis Club, a remarkable volunteer-driven organization in my riding. Founded in 2019, the organization has grown to nearly 150 members and has built state-of-the-art facilities through a partnership with the City of Surrey.

The club runs a strong youth program and hosts the popular Surrey Open tournament. This past Sunday, I was proud to attend its annual food drive, an inspiring community event where members came together to support local food banks.

The Newton Tennis Club continues to show true community spirit, athletic excellence and a commitment to giving back. It is a great example of how sports can bring people together and make our communities stronger.

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CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank again the great people of Tobique—Mactaquac for the honour of serving them here in the people's House. I also want

to express my deep gratitude to my wife Crystal, our family and the dedicated team of staff who do the important work every day so that we can be here. I could not do this without them.

In the days ahead, we will continue to champion those who are too often overlooked and forgotten: the bucket carriers, the table waiters, the farmers, the builders and the workers. These hard-working Canadians, past and present, form the foundation of our great country, and they will be the key to our nation's comeback.

We as the opposition will offer a clear alternative vision to Canadians, a vision that encourages increased Canadian self-reliance, security and prosperity for all, a vision that brings us together from every region, both urban and rural, to ensure that our beloved nation always remains the true north strong and free.

Though the waters we face are turbulent, I still believe that our best days are ahead. As our beloved national anthem declares, may God continue to keep our land glorious and free.

* * *

KNOX UNITED CHURCH

Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two weekends ago, I was pleased to participate in the annual Doors Open Toronto event by visiting a storied institution in my riding of Scarborough North. For over 175 years, Knox United Church, in the heart of the former village of Agincourt, has stood as a beacon of faith, compassion and community service.

On June 25, 1848, Knox held its first worship service and communion in a wood-framed building attended by 40 congregants. In 1872, the church was rebuilt, resulting in its enduring brick structure, which remains a prominent example of Gothic revival architecture. Today, Knox United Church lives by its motto, "Diverse in Culture, United in Faith", opening its doors to share the stories and deep legacy within the brickwork of this iconic church.

To church council chair and former MPP David Warner, Reverend Bright Yun, the entire staff team, volunteers and members, I offer my deepest gratitude and congratulations.

* * *

• (1405)

JUSTICE

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are living in fear. Violent crime is up 50%, gang-related homicides are up 78% and gun crime has skyrocketed 116%. These are not just numbers. They reflect shattered families, terrified communities and lives forever changed.

The heartbreaking truth is this: Many of these crimes are being committed by repeat violent offenders, individuals who should have never been out on the streets in the first place. Why? It is because of the Liberal government's so-called justice reforms, Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, which enshrined the principle of restraint into law and weakened and gutted our bail system.

Police chiefs, premiers, frontline officers and victims' families are pleading for change. It is time to listen, and that starts by repealing Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 and replacing them with real reforms that put public safety first. Protecting our communities should never be a partisan issue. Canadians deserve better.

* * *

[Translation]

OTTAWA—VANIER—GLOUCESTER

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great humility that I rise today for my first statement in this 45th Parliament. I am very grateful to the voters of Ottawa—Vanier—Gloucester for placing their trust in me for a fourth term. None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of hundreds of volunteers, my campaign team and my family.

I welcome the community of Blackburn Hamlet, which is now part of the riding.

[English]

I remain committed to advancing the issues that matter to our citizens. We are addressing affordability with a middle-class tax cut and building one strong, fair and united Canadian economy for everyone. From affordable housing to the revitalization of our downtown core, including the ByWard Market, to protecting the public service, I am committed to strengthening the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods.

I once again thank residents, my family, volunteers and my team. It is a privilege to represent them in the House of Commons.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government, Canada is barely recognizable. We used to be a country where seniors could walk to the park in peace and where parents could let their kids walk to school safely, but not anymore.

Just yesterday, York Regional Police executed 15 search warrants in Richmond Hill and neighbouring communities against criminal organizations. Twenty-three people were arrested, with over 300 charges laid and 32 illegal firearms seized, and 700,000 doses of fentanyl, enough to kill a city, were found. In another case from the Toronto Police Service, 10 criminals were arrested after a mass shooting on March 7, multiple guns were seized and 200 criminal charges were laid, including 24 counts of murder. This is what happens when the Liberals govern with ideology instead of common sense.

Statements by Members

It is time to punish organized crime, stop the flow of deadly drugs going across our borders, keep criminals behind bars and bring home safety to our streets. Enough is enough. The Liberal government needs to stop handcuffing our police officers and finally start handcuffing the criminals and keeping them in jail.

* * *

GRADUATION CONGRATULATIONS

Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my heartfelt congratulations to all the graduates of 2025 from Brampton South and across Canada.

Graduation marks the completion of years of hard work and perseverance. Through their academic journey, each graduate has shown incredible growth as a young scholar and Canadian. I thank all parents, teachers and mentors for all their hard work to support our graduates on the path to their dreams.

As the 2025 graduating class embarks on a new chapter filled with possibilities, I would like to wish every graduate all the best in their future endeavours. I look forward to celebrating their continued successes. Congratulations to the class of 2025 and best wishes.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, housing prices are skyrocketing across Canada. In the Toronto area, the market dropped by 89% in recent months compared to the past 10 years, with seven consecutive months of crisis.

In Montmorency—Charlevoix, housing has become so inaccessible that businesses can no longer attract people to come and work there, and this is having a significant economic impact.

Can we finally put common sense back at the heart of our policies and do what the Conservative Party is proposing, which is to lower taxes, build more housing, and make the dream of home ownership accessible again so that families can finally settle in the beautiful Montmorency—Charlevoix region?

* * *

• (1410)

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, we are celebrating World Environment Day, the theme of which is beating plastic pollution. Canadians throw away over three million tonnes of plastic waste every year. This waste burdens our economy and threatens the health of people and the environment, including wildlife, rivers, lakes and oceans.

Statements by Members

Over 99% of plastic is produced from fossil fuels. That means that the same people who are poisoning us with their oil and gas are filling every corner of the planet with plastic, from the bottom of our oceans to our dinner plates.

Two months from today, countries around the world will meet to adopt a global treaty to finally end the plastic era. The best way to resolve this problem is simple: produce less plastic. What is more, alternatives already exist.

Acting in the common good does not mean lining the already full pockets of oil and gas companies. It means leaving our children with a healthy environment, with clean air and clean water.

* * *

[English]

VANCOUVER QUADRA

Wade Grant (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I rose to ask a question, and in the interest of time, I was not able to introduce myself. I am the proud member representing the people from Vancouver Quadra. I am the very first member of the Musqueam First Nation to hold a seat in this House.

I want to thank my family. I want to thank my volunteers. I want to thank those who helped me on my campaign and especially my son Eli, my daughter Isla, my fiancée Marie and my predecessor, the Hon. Joyce Murray, for all the work she did in the House as well.

I want to make sure I move forward. We have always welcomed people in Vancouver Quadra. We welcomed Captain Narvaez in the 1700s, we welcomed my grandfather Hong Tim Hing in the 1920s, and we continue to welcome people from around the world. I will continue to work for each and every one of them.

I say *hay čxʷ qə*, in my language, which means thank you.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada had a balanced, effective immigration system. It worked for newcomers, Canadians and our country. However, after 10 years of the Liberal government, the system is in chaos. Liberals ignored warnings, cut corners on application vetting, and opened doors for fraud and abuse in the temporary foreign worker, refugee and international student programs.

Now over a million people are here with expired visas or expiring visas, and there is still no plan to address it. Canada now has the highest population growth in the G7, and the OECD confirms that the high immigration is straining our housing, our jobs and our health care. Despite this, the Liberals issued 180,000 temporary foreign worker permits this year alone, a 10% increase from last quarter.

This is not sustainable. Canadians know it. The OECD and the Bank of Canada know it. Why do the Liberals not know it?

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been four years since we lost the Afzaal family, Madiha, Salman, Talat and Yumnah, in a horrific Islamophobic attack that left a nine-year-old orphaned and a community devastated. This was not just a hate crime; it was terrorism, driven by Islamophobia and targeted hate.

More and more, we are experiencing violent hate in Canada that breaks hearts, steals lives and impedes our collective identity. We need to do better. We remember the Afzaal family not just for how their lives ended but for how they lived, with love and with hope for a strong future.

Tomorrow, as families gather to celebrate Eid al-Adha, we are reminded that they should be here too, celebrating and surrounded by loved ones. We owe it to them, and to everyone who has ever felt unsafe because of their identity, to do better, to protect Canadians against hate. Their lives mattered; their stories matter. We will remember, and we will act.

* * *

COST OF FOOD

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while knocking on doors this past election, the number one thing I heard about at the doors was the skyrocketing price of groceries. I heard from parents about the cost to feed their kids and to put food on the table if prices kept rising. They asked me where it will stop.

We know that food inflation at the grocery store since the start of this year is out of control: beef up 34%, oranges up 26%, apples up 18% and rice up 14%. Now the Liberals are bringing in a half-trillion dollars in inflationary spending, increasing spending by 8% when they promised to cap it at 2%.

Will the Liberals table a budget that reduces inflation and cuts taxes so Canadians can afford to feed their families?

• (1415)

[Translation]

DONALD LEBLANC

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 31, the community of Val-d'Amour in Restigouche celebrated an exceptional volunteer, Donald LeBlanc, whose commitment to community spans more than 50 years.

Through his contribution to local governance, his active participation on numerous boards of directors and community organizations, and his involvement in the forestry workers' co-operative and in sports, recreation and many other areas of community life, Mr. LeBlanc has left a lasting mark on his region.

As the member of Parliament for Madawaska—Restigouche, I am honoured to recognize Mr. LeBlanc's remarkable journey, which embodies the values of dedication, solidarity and public service that are the backbone of our communities. I was very pleased to attend the event held in his honour.

I offer my sincere congratulations to Mr. LeBlanc. I thank him for his passion and for all the time he has devoted to making a real difference in his community.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parliament is demanding a budget from this Liberal government. Our Conservative motion passed, requiring the Prime Minister to table a budget this spring, yet the Liberals think they can spend half a trillion dollars without a budget. Single moms, seniors and small business owners do not get the luxury of budget-free spending, and neither should this government.

Yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer warned, clearly, that the Liberals' reckless spending means higher deficits, and exploding interest payments on the federal debt are projected to hit \$70 billion per year. This means less money for hospitals and health care, schools and teachers.

Liberals shattered their promise to cap spending at 2%, instead increasing it by 8%. They broke their promise to reduce spending on consultants, ballooning it by 35% to a record-smashing \$26 billion, while growing the bureaucracy by 44%. Canadians face nearly 7% unemployment, record-high missed mortgage payments and food prices that are driving even full-time workers to food banks.

It is time for a responsible budget to reverse this lost decade of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Halifax has the floor.

* * *

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge World Environment Day and join the global community in recognizing the urgent need to end plastic pollution, which is this year's theme. In Halifax, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, we feel the impact of plastic pollution first-hand. Our marine her-

Oral Questions

itage, vibrant coastal communities, fisheries and rich ecosystems depend on a healthy environment.

We do not see this work as just a necessity; we see it as an opportunity, an opportunity to innovate, lead, build a stronger economy and create a more resilient future for generations to come.

[Translation]

From tackling ocean pollution to innovating in clean technologies and restoring natural habitats, the people of Halifax are committed and determined.

[English]

I want to thank Haligonians who are working hard to protect our environment today and every day.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's budgetary watchdog is sounding the alarm bells that interest on the federal debt will soar past \$70 billion in four years. Debt interest payments already exceed provincial health care transfers, military spending or total GST revenue. However, the Prime Minister wants to spend even more money than Justin Trudeau did without tabling a budget.

Canadians want to know, on what date will the Liberals table a budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the question and thank him for taking a great first step this morning. In fact, the Conservatives voted for the ways and means motion to give a break to 22 million Canadians. We told them that Canadians are watching. They watched this morning, but they will also watch when we are voting on the main bill.

We hope the Conservatives will do the right thing and support Canadians in their time of need.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that guy should apologize for collecting carbon tax for the last 10 years.

Oral Questions

Now the OECD says Canada will be hit the hardest in a looming global slowdown as investment fees, unemployment and core inflation climb. The Prime Minister already broke his promise of capping spending at 2%. Instead, he will spend 8% and half a trillion dollars in inflationary spending.

Why do the Liberals not table a budget today and show Canadians exactly how much more economic vandalism they will do than Justin Trudeau did?

• (1420)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have more good news for the member. If he were to take the time to read, he would see that not only are we giving a break to 22 million Canadians, but we are eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers on homes up to \$1 million. This is a great measure. Not only this, but we are going to be removing the consumer carbon price from law.

All Conservatives should be celebrating because I know Canadians are celebrating at home today.

Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): The minister voted against all of that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you, would you sign a cheque for \$486 billion without knowing where the money was going? That is exactly what the government is asking taxpayers to do: sign a blank cheque for half a trillion dollars that will inevitably lead to inflation. Conservatives and Parliament have voted for the Liberals to produce a budget this spring.

When will the Prime Minister respect the will of Parliament and produce a budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great day to answer that question, because the member is asking what is in the main estimates. I know Canadians would be happy to learn that in the main estimates, there are credits for dental care that is helping a lot of seniors across our country. We are talking about credits for child care, and I know there are people in the member's riding who are benefiting from that. We are also talking about pharmacare. Those are programs that are part of the fabric in Canada. They make Canada strong.

Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people in my riding will benefit when taxes go down. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that the government's wasteful spending is costing Canadians \$70 billion in interest payments just on the debt. That is more than it is spending on health care.

The Liberals are back to their old ways of breaking promises. They broke their promise to cap spending at 2% and increased it to 8%. They broke their promise to cut spending on Liberal consultants and increased that by \$7 billion.

When will the Prime Minister produce a budget and stop wasting taxpayer dollars?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the difference between the Conservatives and us on this side of the House is that on this side, we are proud to support families. We are proud of the dental care

program that is helping our seniors. We are proud of the child care program. I was at the G7 recently, and colleagues were applauding Canada. Not only is it a great policy, but it is also an economic policy to generate growth in this country.

On this side of the House, we are proud to support Canadians. I just hope the Conservatives will come on board.

* * *

STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. Donald Trump's 50% tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum are wrong and unjustified.

Facing enormous business and job losses, the very Prime Minister who promised to be elbows up is now allowing trade at the new Gordie Howe bridge to collapse. The Prime Minister promised retaliatory tariffs to secure \$20 billion to support steel and aluminum workers.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to table a spring budget, or will he just let his empty promises rust?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government received a mandate from Canadians to negotiate a new security and economic partnership with the United States. We entirely share our colleague's view that the tariffs imposed, and they are not only on steel and aluminum, at a ridiculously punitive rate of 50%, are unjustified and illegal, as are all the other tariffs imposed on the Canadian economy.

That is why Canada responded firmly and clearly. We also said that we will support our industries and our workers as we get through this together.

[Translation]

Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the aluminum tariffs imposed by President Trump are unjustified. It is an attack on our economy and on workers in that industry. The Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region has four aluminum smelters that account for 32% of Canadian aluminum production.

The Prime Minister told us that he was the man for this situation and that he had a plan, but the reality is that the tariffs have gotten worse.

What is he going to do to protect the workers in Saguenay?

• (1425)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we fully share the concerns of our colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

Aluminum workers in Saguenay are among the best workers in Canada. The United States relies on the aluminum that Canada produces. It decided to impose 50% tariffs. That is going to hurt its economy.

We understand that this is a worrisome situation for workers and the industry in Canada. That is precisely why we are going to support the workers and the industry. We are working with the Government of Quebec, and we will continue to do so.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as of yesterday, U.S. tariffs on aluminum and steel have doubled to 50%. After three months of this dispute, time is running out for our industries. However, after three months, they have yet to receive any support.

The Prime Minister says he is in intensive discussions with the Americans, which is good. However, after three months, the government should no longer be at the intensive discussion stage. It should be at the intensive action stage. Our industries need liquidity and wage subsidies.

After three months of inaction, will the Prime Minister finally protect our workers and industries?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I can assure my colleague that we fully share the concerns of all Canadians about the negative consequences the American tariffs are having.

As I said in a response a few moments ago, with regard to the aluminum industry in Quebec and the steel industry in the rest of Canada, the Americans rely on our product. We have responded very firmly. We are one of the countries that has had the courage to respond to these unjustified tariffs.

We will also protect industries and workers.

* * *

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the promised Liberal magic is not working on Donald Trump, and Quebec is suffering the consequences.

Tariffs of 50% are being imposed on our aluminum and our steel. Some 2,000 layoffs were announced in our forestry industry, and that is not all. Yesterday, we learned that our aerospace industry is in the line of fire, and that Washington is thinking of imposing tariffs by the end of the month. Yet, in Ottawa, there is still no support for our key sectors, still no budget. The Liberals are still improvising.

Oral Questions

It has been three months. Sharing our concerns is not enough. What is the government waiting for? When will it protect industries in Quebec?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, naturally, we are working every day to fight the 50% tariffs on steel and aluminum.

I met with the CEOs in the steel industry again this morning, and I am in contact with those in the aluminum industry. We will continue to fight those tariffs. We will also protect our industries in Quebec and across Canada, and we will invest and build.

That is why we are going to build an extremely strong defence industry to support our jobs here. We will have major projects of national significance that, I hope, the Bloc Québécois will support.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, steel and aluminum tariffs are doubling, and 2,000 forestry jobs have been lost. The trade war is heating up. Our industries and workers need support. We need a budget.

Yesterday, the throne speech was adopted on the condition that at least a budget update would be adopted. Today, the Liberals are being asked to respect their own throne speech.

Will they keep their word for once and immediately table an economic update with relief measures?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Measures are already in place to support various sectors of the Canadian economy. We had already planned to implement measures to deal with the tariff war, as my colleague said. On this side of the House, we have always been clear. We will fight against tariffs, we will protect our workers and our industries, and we will build a Canada together.

I am sure that my Bloc Québécois colleagues are happy to build a strong Canada.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for years the Liberals have promised families that they will lower the cost of groceries, telling Canadians that relief is coming soon, and for years they have failed families. The Prime Minister himself said that he will be judged by the price of groceries. The cost of everything, from beef to oranges, is up by over 25% since the beginning of this year alone.

With an additional half a trillion dollars in spending adding more fuel to the food and inflationary crisis, why can the Prime Minister not even table a budget?

Oral Questions

• (1430)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, child poverty is down by 38%. That is because of programs such as the Canada child benefit. That is because of programs such as affordable child care, which is available all across the country.

We are working with families. We are working with youth and children, and we will continue to do that work together. We hope the opposition gets on board.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to get on board with. Unlike the government, Canadians actually have to budget their money in order to survive. They cannot tax and spend their way out of hunger. After their rent, mortgage and utilities, they are left with fewer dollars than ever to buy the food their families need, and those few dollars are not going as far as they used to. Canadians are at their wits' end, and they expect and deserve a plan that delivers relief.

Will the government exercise a modicum of competency and table a spring budget?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, competency would be not voting against legislation, bills and programs that actually put food in the stomachs of kids, such as the Canada school nutrition program, which is feeding over 400,000 children this year, in partnership with provinces and territories.

Every time there is a measure put forward by the government to ensure that kids have food, parents have child care or parents have the money they need to raise their kids, the opposition party has voted against it.

Let us be honest, the opposition party is not there for families.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bridges to Hope is a vital food bank in Newfoundland and Labrador that is being forced to double its size due to a 30% increase in demand. This surge reflects the harsh reality that more and more families cannot afford groceries. The cost of beef is up 34%. Oranges are up 26%, and coffee is up 9%. Canadians do not have any hope for relief without a clear fiscal plan.

Will the Prime Minister finally table a budget that addresses the cost of living crisis and ensures Canadians can put food on their tables?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have talked about the reduction in child poverty, but for adults between 18 and 65, it has gone down by 26% since 2015. That is in large part because of the programs that we have put in place to help families. We want to talk about reducing costs of food. The Canada school food program reduces costs of groceries on average by \$800 a year for every family.

Let us see if the Conservatives can get on board with programs that really help families.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "Canadians will hold account by their experience at the grocery store." These are the words of the Prime Minister. Single mothers go to the grocery store and walk out with two bags of groceries, enough for two days, and it costs them \$100. Now the Liberals are bringing in a half a trillion in new spending, increasing it by 8%, when they had promise to cap it at 2%.

Once again, will the Liberals table a spring budget that reduces inflation and cuts taxes so Canadians can afford to feed their families?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important in St. John's, and in Newfoundland and Labrador, that we protect children. The school food program was such an important initiative, and I found it so disappointing that the opposition voted against it.

I hope that, when there is an opportunity to vote to support this program, which puts food in children's bellies, the opposition and the member across will vote to support food for children.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has admitted that he does not do his own grocery shopping. He does not even know how much a family of four spends on groceries. He either does not know or does not care that Canadian families are struggling to put food on the table because of the Liberal government's failure to tackle inflation. Under the Liberals, the most expensive vehicle to operate in Canada is now the shopping cart.

Will the Liberals put forward a budget plan that would lower inflation, so that Canadians can feed their families?

• (1435)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, either they cannot hear or this is willful ignorance of their own past behaviour. What we see repeatedly is the Conservative Party voting again and again against families. Whether it is the Canada child benefit, the national school food program or dental care, which are providing support to families all across the country while alleviating costs and improving the health of Canadians, they vote against it. They are voting against families every single time.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was the Prime Minister who said that Canadians will hold them accountable based on their experience at the grocery store.

The experience is a nightmare, and Canadians are getting fed up. Under the Liberal government, food prices have skyrocketed, but instead of offering a real budget plan, the Liberals are plowing ahead with a half trillion dollars in new spending. Hard-working Canadians are having to foot the bill for the government's runaway deficits every time they shop for groceries.

How is this acceptable?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how is it acceptable that, when a government offers the Canada child benefit, which lifts almost 500,000 children out of poverty, the opposition votes against it, and that they muse about cutting that program if they were ever to gain office?

It is no wonder that Canadians chose us in the last election. They know who has their backs. They know who is fighting for them. These kinds of narratives do not match the reality they see from Conservatives.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of groceries has skyrocketed. Unfortunately, 10 years of Liberal inflationary deficits have forced a record number of Canadians to use food banks. Unfortunately, I ran into a friend of mine from high school, François, there. He works, and he makes a budget, but he is unable to make ends meet. Children from my riding, in Victoriaville, go to school with an empty lunch box. There is nothing inside. Thank goodness we have organizations that take care of them.

Will the Liberals finally table a budget to reduce inflation, lower taxes and put food on the table for our children?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 28, Canadians rejected the kind of regression that the Conservative Party would have brought to Canada.

We see it today. The Conservatives would have had no qualms about cutting programs that Canadians and our communities depend on, whether it be the Canada child benefit or the Canadian dental care plan, which was just expanded to cover people between the ages of 18 and 64 and has already helped millions of Canadians across the country.

It is embarrassing, today, to see them proposing things that would set Canada back. They should support us with the estimates.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Rétabec in my region announced that it is laying off 2,000 workers indefinitely. The Bloc Québécois would first like to express its solidarity with the families affected.

For years, we have been saying that the forestry industry needs a liquidity program. For years, we have been saying that we need to support secondary and tertiary processing to create more added value in the forestry industry. For years, we have been saying in Ot-

tawa that we need a program that allows for and promotes the use of wood.

Two thousand jobs have been lost in my region. When will the government wake up?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that the forestry industry is important. The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and I will be working on this issue.

It will also be a pleasure to work with the Bloc Québécois member to protect and create jobs in his riding and across Quebec, especially in the regions affected by the tariff war, as is the case for the forestry industry.

In the meantime, we will work on solutions. We are ready to discuss this with my colleague because we have solutions that can be made available, particularly through Canada Economic Development for Quebec regions.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the layoffs in the forestry industry are an indication of what is going to happen with steel and aluminum if Ottawa does not change its current approach, which is to do nothing at all. We know that it is not what they are known for, but maybe the Liberals could be proactive for once. They need to proactively offer cash to the industry and create a wage subsidy to prevent a wave of layoffs.

Tariffs doubled yesterday. Could Ottawa take action for once before plants start closing and jobs start disappearing?

• (1440)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike my colleague who likes to complain, especially when asking his questions, our goal is to find solutions. I will be pleased to work with him because there are solutions on the table and provisions to help businesses manage their cash flow. That is why, today, I was with the CEOs of the steel industry to talk to them about what is possible.

Let us work together and be constructive.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Atlantic Canadians are suffering under a Liberal government that has allowed housing costs to double and housing inflation to rise faster in Canada than in any other G7 country. In Halifax, homelessness has doubled in just the last two years. Over 1,100 people in the city are homeless, and 123 of those, at least, are children. These children do not want more government bureaucracy; they want a place to call home.

Oral Questions

When will the Prime Minister understand that doing more of the same is actually going to make the problem worse?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, homelessness is a huge challenge right across the country. We face a huge challenge in tackling it with affordable housing. We need to be working with the cities, towns and indigenous communities to make sure we are delivering.

There is a reason we have a new government here, with a new cabinet, that is focused on building Canada and focused first and foremost on building affordable housing for the people who need it the most.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the same old government with the same old failed solutions. The housing crisis did not just happen; it is the direct result of 10 years of Liberal government mismanagement. After only a decade, rent in Canada has doubled, the amount required for a down payment to buy a home has doubled and mortgages have doubled. The dream of owning a home in Canada is slipping away for many Canadians.

When will the minister understand that doing more of the same and having the same failed policies is not going to result in a solution for Canadians?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am blessed to have the opportunity to answer questions in the House, but the member opposite would have a lot more credibility if he had not voted against the rapid housing initiative, the federal co-investment fund and the housing accelerator fund that his community wanted.

The Conservatives hold themselves up as stewards of housing. They are not. They voted against every housing initiative that we put forward to help Canadians.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, housing has become unaffordable under the Liberal government. According to CMHC, over half of Canadians are struggling to pay down their mortgage, 63% are worried about defaulting, 17% have missed a payment and 26% are using credit to pay off credit. In the greater Vancouver area, homeowners are stressed out and are not sure how they are going to make ends meet.

Will the Minister of Housing acknowledge that Liberal economic incompetence has created this crisis and that we are halfway through the year and still have no budget?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contrary to Conservative disinformation, housing starts are up across the country right now. We are seeing both a year-over-year increase in housing starts and certainly a large increase over when the leader of the Conservative Party was the housing minister.

We are going to take this forward with the most ambitious housing plan that has ever been seen in Canada. We are going to build affordable housing across this country.

Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a new TD report says that the Liberal housing plan to build 500,000 homes a

year is likely to fall well short, but that is really no surprise since this promise comes from the same party that said it would plant two billion trees. TD says that even 400,000 homes a year is not possible, since housing starts in Canada actually declined by 30,000 units this year. Without a budget, there is no real plan for housing.

When will the government table a budget so Canadians can know whether this latest Liberal promise will allow them to afford a roof over their head?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new government is taking action on housing affordability with a GST cut for new homebuyers. We appreciate the support around the House for that initiative to make housing more affordable, but we are going to go a lot further than that. We have to revolutionize how we build housing in this country, with modular, off-site construction to make our industry more efficient and to deliver housing faster, greener and cheaper.

● (1445)

[Translation]

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, home ownership is the dream of many young Canadians, but according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, they are worried. They look over their budgets and 63% of them worry they might end up defaulting on their mortgages. The main reason is the rising cost of living. Instead of flying by the seat of its pants, the Liberal government should follow the lead of our young people and base its decisions on a budget.

Will they table a budget this spring, as a majority of members here in the House have requested?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me point out that one of our government's first actions was to lower taxes for 22 million Canadians. That is an average tax reduction of \$840 per family. We are very proud of this very tangible, direct measure to help Canadians and make life more affordable.

We did not stop there. We are removing or reducing the GST on new homes for new homebuyers. This measure is specifically designed to make it easier for new buyers to access home ownership.

It surprises me that my Conservative Party colleague even refuses to support important programs that benefit Canadians in his riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, like the Canadian dental care plan or the Canada child benefit.

It is high time he gave us his support.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Paul Connors (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the offshore energy in Newfoundland and Labrador brings tremendous economic benefit to our province. It creates jobs, opportunity and prosperity for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This sector has grown, with some of the strongest environmental protections in the world, ensuring economic growth alongside a healthy environment.

What is the view of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources on the development of offshore energy in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government supports the development of offshore energy in Newfoundland and Labrador. Offshore energy is one of Canada's great strengths. It supports the people in the province with good wages and opportunities, while developing it in a sustainable way. We will fast-track offshore energy projects to build the strongest economy in the G7.

I will add, "Go, Oilers."

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Mr. Speaker, words do not build pipelines; actions do, actions like scrapping Trudeau's Bill C-69, his west coast shipping ban, the industrial carbon tax and the Liberal energy cap. However, the radical NDP premier and the radicals in the federal Liberal cabinet are doing all that they can to keep these policies in place and to block pipelines from getting built.

Will the Prime Minister reverse all these Trudeau-era policies and make sure he shows that he is not just another wolf in sheep's clothing looking to kill our oil and gas industry?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have told us that they want us to build and retool our economy. The PM has been clear: We want to build a low-cost, low-risk, low-carbon economy. Canadians will build the infrastructure that makes us the strongest economy in the G7.

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Mr. Speaker, well, the minister can use all the nice words he wants, but they mean nothing without action, and nothing gets built without removing the barriers: Trudeau's Bill C-69, his west coast shipping ban, his oil and gas cap and the industrial carbon tax. The Prime Minister claimed that he is the man with the plan, but his plan for the oil and gas sector seems to be the same anti-energy approach as Justin Trudeau's.

It is time for the Prime Minister to be honest with Canadians. If he cannot even find consensus among his own cabinet, how is he going to approve a pipeline?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, does the member know what gets

Oral Questions

things built? It is working with the premiers from all the provinces and territories, like we saw on Monday.

We have heard from Canadians. Canadians want to see us build Canada in the face of what we are seeing of tariffs from Donald Trump, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are going to build a strong economy, and we are going to be the strongest economy in the G7. That is because we are sitting with the premiers, and we are not taking advice from the Conservatives.

● (1450)

[Translation]

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the consensus is clear. Calls to build pipelines and energy infrastructure are growing. The people of Quebec and Beauce want pipelines. The only obstacle is the Liberal government. Building energy projects reduces our dependence on the United States, strengthens the Canadian economy and creates wealth for Canadians. Anti-energy Bill C-69 must be repealed.

Why does the Liberal government want to continue impoverishing Canadians?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been very clear. They want us to build a very strong country and a very strong economy. What we saw on Monday was exactly that. The Prime Minister sat down with premiers from across the country. We are united in the face of what we are seeing from the United States.

We will work to build a strong economy together. We will not follow the Conservatives' advice.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised to cap foreign study permits, which also allow people to work in Canada, but new data shows that the Liberals blew their cap out of the water by handing out a whopping 500,000 foreign study permits last year, roughly the same population as all of Halifax.

Why did the Liberals bring half a million foreign students to Canada during a massive housing shortage and while youth in Canada cannot find a job?

Oral Questions

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those figures are inaccurate. That is misinformation. The new government is hard at work to improve our immigration system, and the introduction of Bill C-2 on Tuesday was an example of that. We are taking significant steps to preserve the integrity of our system while also upholding our humanitarian commitments, because we understand that a well-managed immigration system is essential to a safer, stronger Canada.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I got the numbers from the minister's website; I went onto the website and read them. In the middle of a housing crisis, she brought 500,000 people to Canada. These people compete with Canadians for jobs, and they require housing and health care.

If the minister's department's numbers are not the real numbers, what are the real numbers?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me give the member opposite a lesson on immigration numbers, permits and visas. There are many applications and many individuals. We recognize that to balance our immigration and have a good country, we need temporary residents and permanent residents. Some applicants have multiple numbers; therefore I would suggest we look into the numbers a bit more in detail.

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the Liberals' promising Canadians that they are capping immigration, here are the facts. They added over 500,000 more international students. They approved nearly 180,000 more temporary foreign workers. Now we have millions of people in our country with expired or expiring visas and no plan on how they will leave. The Liberals' mismanagement has put pressure on housing, health care and jobs.

After the Liberals missed their own targets to lower immigration and lost control of the system, why should Canadians believe them anymore?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, international students are vital to Canada. Ask any of our provinces and institutions. Our temporary foreign workers are as well. They are essential to our agricultural sector, to our fishing sector and to many facets of our population. Having said that, we understand, in the new government, that we need a balanced system. For that reason we have lowered the number of permanent residents as well as the temporary numbers. We understand how to balance and how to work efficiently within our system.

[Translation]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, successful immigration is essential for our country's development.

Unfortunately, for the past 10 years, immigration has been anything but successful. It has been irresponsible immigration because of the Liberals' policies. The primary victims are the immigrants themselves. As a matter of fact, millions of immigrants are seeing their visas expire.

What is the government going to do to ensure that everything goes well for them and for the country?

• (1455)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand very well on this side of the House that immigration is essential to grow our economy and strengthen our communities. Canadians want a solid and sustainable immigration system that allows Canada and those who come here to succeed.

On this side of the House we are working on improving Canada and making it strong.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on her French, but the congratulations end there.

They are entirely responsible for the situation that we are currently in and for the immigration problem that we are facing. These people have presided over irresponsible immigration for the past 10 years. It is no coincidence that during the throne speech the King said that “balance” needs to be restored. I would just like to remind my colleague that when we said this six months ago, we were called intolerant. The result is that, as we speak, our health care system, our schools and our housing cannot meet the needs of immigrants.

Why has the Liberal government allowed this human tragedy to happen and worsen?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that we need a balanced immigration system that takes into account the capacity of Quebec and Canada to accept immigrants. That is why we are gradually lowering immigration levels. We have also placed restrictions on issuing visas.

I would just like to point out one thing. While his colleague from Bowmanville—Oshawa North says that we should scrap the temporary foreign worker program, his constituents in the Quebec City area, in Lévis, Bellechasse and Chaudière-Appalaches, tell us that they need these workers to keep our factories running throughout Quebec.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 700,000 doses of fentanyl, 32 illegal guns and seven people on bail. These are the statistics from a recent raid just yesterday in York. I commend the police for doing such a good job. I also condemn the Liberals for allowing this sort of crime to flourish in Canada.

Indeed, catch-and-release is alive and well in Canada, so why do the Liberals not accept the Conservatives' plan to end catch-and-release so we can crack down on gun and fentanyl traffickers?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, we are committed to making it tougher for violent criminals to get bail, and we will impose stricter sentences for repeat violent offenders.

However, let me be clear. The provinces and territories have a critical role to play in the administration of bail. They must ensure that they have the capacity needed when it comes to prosecutors, judges, JPs and jails, just to name a few things. This is imperative in order to get our streets safe. The law currently says that people who are at risk of reoffending or a flight risk should not be given bail.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, illegal fishing in international waters leads to damage here at home and abroad. In the Pacific Ocean, dark vessels fish indiscriminately, using illegal gear and catching endangered and at-risk species. This hurts wild Pacific salmon, as well as global supply chains that we and our allies rely on.

Can the Minister of Fisheries tell us what Canada's new government is doing to combat illegal fishing in international waters?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, illegal fishing is appalling, and that is why Canada has taken a key role in the fight through Operation North Pacific Guard. Our expertly trained fisheries officers and Canadian Coast Guard crew are currently working to ensure that we disrupt the activities that lead to illegal fishing.

I am also pleased to say that the crew of the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* is currently engaged in this mission. I wish the crew of the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* fair seas and following winds.

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ETHICS

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned some disturbing news today. A Liberal cabinet minister from Manitoba has been found to have a serious history of harassment and unprofessional conduct in the workplace. A former subordinate said they endured humiliation, intimidation and months of psychological warfare by the minister in her previous job. This is obviously completely unacceptable and unworthy of a minister of the Crown.

The Prime Minister decides who sits around the cabinet table, so was he unaware of this disturbing history of workplace abuse, or did he know and just not care?

• (1500)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is obviously committed to fostering a healthy work environment for everyone in the workplace, characterized by collegiality and mutual respect, and that is what we have to say on the matter.

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the victim's experience was substantiated by an independent review conducted by a law firm. Many people have been victims of work-

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place bullying, and few have the courage to speak out. This brave woman did, and she attempted to contact the Liberal Party, who did not even dignify this with a response.

Really, what message does this send to victims, that if one's boss engages in months of psychological warfare, the Prime Minister of Canada may promote them to the highest offices in the land? Truly, this is an unacceptable standard.

Does the Prime Minister disagree? Does he believe this is acceptable?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is a person of integrity who has been involved in public service on many levels and who has opted to serve her constituents and the public in this way. She is committed to healthy workplaces, she is committed to respect, she is committed to compassion and she will be working hard to deliver results for her constituents, the people of Manitoba and indeed all Canadians.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government's catch-and-release policies, Canadian communities are riddled with rising and record crime. People are waking up in the morning hopeful that their car will still be in the driveway. Car thefts have hit record highs in municipalities like Aurora and Richmond Hill. Even worse, violent crimes, such as home invasions and blatant smash-and-grab robberies, have become a regular occurrence in the greater Toronto area.

When will the Liberals finally focus on the safety of our communities and ensure jail before bail for violent criminals?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take an opportunity to say that today we are debating Bill C-2, one of the first measures this government has taken to make our streets safer. We are committed to doing the work that is necessary, and there is also good news. The chief of police of Toronto has stated that auto thefts have decreased by nearly 39%, home invasions are down 42%, homicides are down 67% and shootings are down 46%.

We will be there to protect Canadians.

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jake Sawatzky (New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville for the incredible work they do, both locally and globally.

Oral Questions

In my riding, I have seen organizations having a real impact, from small businesses such as Kozak Ukrainian Eatery to faith-based groups such as Gurdwara Sahib Sukh Sagar. It is organizations like these that play a huge role in the community.

Can the minister please share how our government is supporting groups like these to continue making a difference?

Hon. Randeep Sarai (Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, supporting small and medium-sized Canadian organizations is a top priority for our new government. Organizations such as Cooperation Canada, Nutrition International and the Humanitarian Coalition are just some of those bringing Canadian expertise to the communities that need it most.

With tens of thousands of Canadians working in this sector, these efforts create jobs at home and build stronger self-sufficient partners abroad. I have been meeting with sector leaders and will keep working with them to ensure every dollar has maximum impact.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a convicted child sex offender in New Brunswick was recently sentenced to jail, but instead of going to prison, he was released back into the community on bail pending his appeal. He is now living just 600 metres from a school. The community is shocked that Canada's justice system is so soft on crime. Parents are deeply worried, and the victim's family feels betrayed.

Will the minister finally admit that Canada's bail laws are broken and fix the loopholes to stop convicted child sex offenders from receiving bail?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to say that the bill we have tabled and are debating today is going to make it easier for our policing authorities to be able to catch predators for child exploitation. As I have said before, we are committed to making it tougher for violent criminals to get bail, and we are going to impose stricter sentences for repeat offenders.

As I have said before, the provinces have a huge role to play in the administration of justice, and bail is given by provincial courts. They must do their part as well. The current law states that people who are a risk to the public—

• (1505)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

* * *

FINANCE

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has examined the government's fiscal commitments, and he is warning that the numbers just do not add up. Among his troubling findings, the PBO says there is no way the Liberals can meet their spending targets without “severe cuts to the public service”.

Federal services provide critical supports to Canadians across the country, which are especially needed in this time of economic crisis

and threats from Donald Trump. Will the government come clean and admit that it cannot keep the promises it has made to Canadians?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very committed to presenting a very responsible fiscal framework, a framework that will build Canada in a responsible way and in a sustainable way, and that is going to make Canada strong. I am delighted to see that the member is considering voting in favour of a bill that is going to be presented in this House that is going to make a difference for 22 million Canadians. I would say that would be a great start for the NDP, to follow the Liberals in voting for Canadians.

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STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tens of thousands of well-paying jobs are being threatened by the 50% tariffs on steel in the auto, aerospace and building sector. The Prime Minister said he would stand up to Trump.

[Translation]

However, we cannot trust the Liberals. There is no labour minister. They are forcing people to go back to the office and want to replace workers with AI.

[English]

Why will the government not reform EI and income supports, and place countermeasures on U.S. steel to protect workers?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe the member opposite missed the announcement where the government already took action to change EI to make it easier for workers that are impacted by unfair and illegal tariffs to access EI, including waiving the one-week period, keeping their earnings and making sure that people can access EI in areas where unemployment is growing.

We will continue to work on EI and make sure that it serves the needs of workers, who are deeply impacted in these difficult times.

[Translation]

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management), be deemed read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage, and deemed read a third time and passed.

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

Hearing none, it is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier in question period, the Minister of Immigration accused me of misleading the House. I would like permission to table the date I referred to, which was from her website. It might help her out. I can deliver it by the page if that is what she would like. It is—

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it being the first Thursday that I have had the opportunity to do this, I would like to welcome my counterpart back to this role. We have worked together in the past, and while we definitely do not agree on much, we do have a great working relationship on behalf of our two parties, which represent the millions of Canadians who voted for us. I look forward to continuing that constructive work together in the weeks and months ahead.

I would like to know if the government House leader can update the House as to what the business of the House might be for the rest of this week and next week. We know the government has put some bills on notice and introduced some legislation. I wonder if he could tell the House if, along with finally adopting the Conservative policy of scrapping the consumer carbon tax, the Liberals will do two things. First is finish the job and take the industrial carbon tax off the backs of our steel and aluminum workers. Second, now that they have finally admitted that it was such bad policy, will they apologize to Canadians for collecting such a terrible tax for so long?

• (1510)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it must be said that rarely is the sequel better than the original, but the member will have an opportunity to prove the opposite.

Tributes

We are particularly grateful to the opposition and, through my hon. colleague, his caucus. I thank them for adopting a great throne speech that sketches out a very clear and bold agenda for fixing the Canadian economy and taking on the tariffs. It must be said that steel and aluminum producers are far more concerned about tariffs, and the Prime Minister is singularly committed to addressing the tariff challenge the United States has put to us.

We will have tributes today to a former colleague, friend and member of this House.

After the round of tributes, we will resume debate at second reading of Bill C-2, which contains measures relating to border security between Canada and the United States.

[Translation]

Pursuant to the order made by the House last week, we will debate the estimates in committee of the whole later this evening, as well as next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, as I said in my previous Thursday statement.

Tomorrow morning, we will begin debate on the bill introduced earlier today regarding affordability measures for Canadians. Lastly, next Monday and Tuesday will be allotted days.

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HON. MARC GARNEAU

The Speaker: Following discussion among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand that there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence and pay tribute in honour of our former colleague, the Hon. Marc Garneau.

I invite hon. members to rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

[English]

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to tributes in memory of our former colleague, the Hon. Marc Garneau.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today in the House and across the country, we are mourning the loss of a great Canadian and honouring his memory. This man dedicated his life to serving his country, and his legacy will echo far beyond these walls. Canada has lost one of its most accomplished citizens.

From his early days as an officer in the navy and his pioneering journey as the first Canadian in space to his many years of service to Canadians as a member of Parliament and minister, Marc Garneau's life was marked by unforgettable moments and defined by one constant: service.

Tributes

• (1515)

[English]

Whether wearing the uniform of the Royal Canadian Navy, the flight suit of an astronaut that bore the flag of our nation or the suit and tie of a parliamentarian, Marc Garneau served with honour, with humility and with heart. He inspired a nation in 1984 when he made it into space aboard the *Challenger*. He reminded us that Canadians could dream big and that we could aim for the stars, quite literally.

I was a young person then, and we forget how big an event and moment Marc Garneau's heading into space representing us all really was. When he returned to earth, safely thankfully, he did a splendid, incredible tour across this great country. When he would arrive in communities, throngs would be out to greet him, and Marc, who it must be said was a shy, humble and reserved man, would, we could tell, be bewildered, mystified and in total awe of the outpouring of emotion for him. However, I think he understood then, as he certainly understood later, that he became a powerful symbol of the achievements and accomplishments of this great country of ours.

A bilingual, former naval officer raised from humble origins who got into the atmosphere, Marc Garneau took the dreams, hopes and prayers of little boys and girls everywhere with him into space. Then right after making this history, he gave his next decades to building a better Canada right here at home.

[Translation]

As transport minister and later as foreign affairs minister, he showed thoughtfulness, discipline and quiet strength in every one of his decisions. He was a man of science, but also a man committed to the principles of democracy and diplomacy.

Marc was a colleague to many of us in the House. To a lot of Canadians, he was a national hero. Most of all, Marc was a kind, grounded and caring man. His passing affects everyone who still believes in a society built on knowledge, ethics and accountability. It reminds us that great statesmen can still exist, unassuming, yes, but essential. Marc Garneau leaves behind an inspiring legacy. His journey continues to show everyone that it is possible to dream big, to serve with dignity and to help raise a nation.

[English]

Marc was also a late-blooming but very effective partisan, as I am sure all my colleagues in this House will agree. In his first election, he was not successful, which is amazing to consider.

[Translation]

Marc Garneau ran in Vaudreuil—Soulanges alongside Paul Martin, our former prime minister. I remember campaigning with Mr. Martin and Mr. Garneau in Coteau-du-Lac. We went to an outdoor rink, but it was spring so there was no ice. Schoolchildren and all kinds of people had come out. I am talking about crowds that no other politician in the House could ever dream of attracting. When you come to a town with a leader and the candidate draws thousands of people, young and old, you know that things are going to go well. He was such a hero that even people who would vote against him wanted to come out and talk to this man, to see him and

touch him. Of course, Marc later managed to get a seat in this House.

He took the work very seriously. As we all know, Marc Garneau was a committed Liberal. He was someone who was willing to travel across Canada to help candidates and supporters. He talked about himself and shared his experiences with Liberal supporters, but also with communities as a whole. He always combined his visits to Abbotsford, Vancouver, Calgary and St. John's, Newfoundland, with trips to the far north. He took time not only to meet with young people and schoolchildren, but also to do the hard work of rebuilding the Liberal Party of Canada at that time. This is the tribute that I would like to pay to him.

The person I was happiest to see being sworn in at Rideau Hall on that magnificent day in 2015 was Marc Garneau. A lifetime of achievement brought him there: a life of public service, military service, and service in space. Marc Garneau also served as the chancellor of Carleton University. He served as president of the Canadian Space Agency. A journey filled with such humble public service is remarkable. He was one in a million.

I have no doubt there are members in the House who had the opportunity to talk with Marc Garneau. He was quite reserved, even shy. Yet, if anyone asked him a question about what it was like in space, his eyes would light up, and you would see a man who was proud to have seen the Earth from outer space with his Canadian eyes and proud to have brought the hopes of young men and women with him.

Marc Garneau was far too young to die. He had so many other stories and wonders to tell us and so much more to give. We will miss him. Canada will miss Marc Garneau. Here in the House, we greatly mourn his passing. He was a great man, a great Liberal and, above all, a great Canadian. Thank you, Marc.

• (1520)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC)

Mr. Speaker, I am very humbled to take the floor. I have the great privilege today of paying tribute to the Hon. Marc Garneau. Our country has lost one of its greatest Canadians, one of its greatest citizens.

The Hon. Marc Garneau was an inspiration to millions of Canadians throughout his life, and he will continue to be for decades, if not hundreds of years. He devoted his life to public service and did so everywhere, on land, at sea, and in space. He was a distinguished politician. Across Canada, he is remembered today with words like “integrity”, “dignity” and “statesmanship”. He always acted with deep humility.

Marc Garneau was born in Quebec City, so of course he had a good start in life. He excelled in his engineering studies, but he did not stop there. He earned a Ph.D. in engineering. He served as an officer in the Royal Canadian Navy. When he was young and wanted a change of scenery, he sailed across the Atlantic. While he is most likely the Canadian who has travelled the fastest in space, reaching a speed of 28,000 kilometres per hour, he also crossed the Atlantic in a sailboat. This proves that, for some folks, time is relative.

He was Canada's first astronaut. Four thousand people across the country applied, and he was the number one candidate out of 4,000 Canadians. He was the first to go into space on October 5, 1984. Every anniversary of that date, I would post a little picture to commemorate the event, especially when he sat in the House. As someone who is passionate about space exploration, it was an important moment for me. I would be willing to bet that everyone here who has a bit of white hair, like me, remembers exactly where they were when Mr. Garneau became the first Canadian to go into space.

During his first mission, he did his country proud, not once, but twice. One of his tasks was to shoot a film with an IMAX camera. As many people know, IMAX is a Canadian invention. As he was filming, he always made sure to show the Canadarm.

• (1525)

[English]

The famous Canadarm is one of the greatest Canadian achievements in space. We shall be proud of it for all our lives.

[Translation]

I once met him in private and asked him if he went out of his way to film the Canadarm with the Canadian flag and the word “Canada” on it because we saw it a lot in the films. He said it was just a coincidence. The proud Canadian that he was, he certainly made sure to capture the word “Canada” in the image and the Canadarm in all its splendour. Let us not forget that he brought a hockey puck with him. He was Canadian through and through.

He did not stop after his first trip to space. He made a second and a third trip over the course of his career that spanned 16 years. That is rather significant. An astronaut is already the best of the best. Out of eight billion people, there are only a few hundred who have gone into space. He went three times. That is a testament to his intelligence and his absolutely extraordinary intellectual acuity, but also to his physical health. He perfectly embodied the expression “a healthy mind in a healthy body”.

Beyond these three missions, what impresses me most as a space enthusiast is that he served as a “capcom” a dozen times. What is that? My colleagues have probably seen the movie *Apollo 13*, which shows people in the Houston mission control centre. They are all there and talking to each other, but there is just one person talking from Houston to the astronauts in space, and that is the capcom.

I am making a point of this because capcoms are the only link between Earth and the astronauts in space. They are the most important people for astronauts, especially since all capcoms are astronauts. This dates back to the 1960s. The astronauts at the time wanted them to be peers, people like them who knew how to fly and go into space, not some technical or engineering expert whose only experience was being a passenger on an airplane. Astronauts were particularly sensitive at the time.

Mr. Garneau was the first Canadian capcom. He therefore had the respect and admiration of all his fellow astronauts and everyone who worked in Houston, including engineers and program directors. He was the only one who spoke to the astronauts. This is on top of the fact that when they spoke, they used very long acronyms,

Tributes

but Mr. Garneau knew exactly what they were talking about because he was the direct link to the astronauts. We can be very proud of what Mr. Garneau accomplished as an astronaut.

[English]

He then decided to serve in politics. No one is perfect, obviously. In his memoir, he talked about blue Liberals. That was not so bad; it was a good start.

We might joke about the fact that he was an astronaut, but he was a star candidate, to say the least. Obviously, everybody knew him around the country, and as my other colleague said earlier, he was an attraction for everybody. He worked hard, tirelessly, trying to convince people, and then suddenly, bang, he lost. That is what politics is all about.

It was not his only disappointment in politics, because he lost a second time in the leadership. I will not repeat what my colleague said about the fact that it was incredible that he lost in his first election. He also lost the leadership. I will not repeat what the member said there, but it was incredible that he lost the leadership too.

[Translation]

We know star candidates run for election. They usually get elected, but when they lose, they usually disappear from the political landscape forever. Mr. Garneau did not. He kept trying, which proves that he was in politics for the right reasons. He was there to serve. As another member said, he was first elected as an opposition member. That happens. Then he was elected as a government member. That is what everyone hopes for. He served as a minister, and I had dealings with him a few times.

I must admit that the first time I saw him, it was at the cafeteria in Centre Block. I saw him from a distance. He was eating just like a normal person. I thought, “No way, that’s Marc Garneau right there.” Trembling like a leaf, I said hello and told him I was happy to meet him. He replied and called me by my name. Imagine that. He knew me, the little nobody that I was. I was happy and I could not believe it. He looked at me with a bit of a grin, then I told him I had a huge problem with him because he was one of my Canadian heroes. How could I do my job in the opposition? He said he was convinced that I could do it. Indeed, I tried my best.

He was a good listener. Among other things, I remember conversations I had with him to allow the C Series aircraft, as they were called back then, to land at Billy Bishop airport. Later, he served as foreign affairs minister, for a mere nine months, unfortunately. He did a good job.

Fortunately, even though his life was too short, as my colleague so aptly said earlier, he had the opportunity to write his memoirs, which will be very useful.

Tributes

I would never claim to be a close friend of Mr. Garneau. I kept in touch with him during his political life and even after. We would write to each other from time to time. We shared our observations. The last time I wrote to him was about a month ago. As my granddaughter Léanne was celebrating her fifth birthday, we had the pleasure of giving her an astronaut suit. To her little sister Elizabeth—when it is one child's birthday, you have to give a small gift to the other—we gave a little astronaut stuffie. I sent photos to Mr. Garneau. A few minutes later, he replied that my granddaughters were adorable and that Léanne was wearing a nice suit. He asked if she was ready for a space walk and said that the next generation had arrived.

Yes, the next generation has arrived, and they will always be inspired by your life, which has been so inspiring to all Canadians. Thank you, Mr. Garneau.

● (1530)

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for nearly 15 years, we had the privilege of working alongside a man who left his mark on the history of Quebec and Canada. In the mayhem of parliamentary sparring and our political debates, where partisanship takes over and things heat up rather quickly, far too often we forget the greatness of the women and men we encounter. I am guilty of that. Here in the House, there are women and men who have had breathtaking professional or personal journeys.

However, who can boast about having spent 677 hours in space? Who can boast about starting his days by staring down at the Earth from the sky?

Marc Garneau is the first Quebecker and the first Canadian to have achieved the absolutely extraordinary accomplishment of going to space. The hon. Marc Garneau participated in three NASA missions: one mission in the space shuttle Challenger and two missions in the space shuttle Endeavour. He was responsible for manipulating the famous Canadarm during his second mission to space.

He was an astronaut. He was an astronaut in a spacesuit, just like the ones we saw in the movies that made us dream big when we were kids. Marc Garneau took the dream that was out of reach for so many young Quebeckers and Canadians and made it a reality. He paved the way for Chris Hadfield, Julie Payette and David Saint-Jacques, to name just a few. He showed us the way to the stars.

Of course, politically, we had our disagreements. To be honest, I remember the disagreements more than the agreements. Nevertheless, he was among the first federal Liberals to want to ensure that the Quebec nation was recognized in the federal Parliament. His commitment to Quebec must be recognized. The Canadian space program and the important role that aeronautics and aerospace play in Quebec's economy, particularly in the greater Montreal area, would not be the same without Marc Garneau's contribution.

Marc Garneau left us yesterday. To his family, his friends, his colleagues who served with him, to those who travelled around our blue planet with him, and to those who have chosen to follow in his footsteps and embrace the dream of going into space, I offer, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, my sincere condolences.

Thank you, Mr. Garneau.

● (1535)

[English]

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with sincere and profound respect that New Democrats add our voices to honour the life and legacy of our colleague, the Hon. Marc Garneau, a trailblazer, a patriot, a devoted public servant and an exceptional human being.

As Canada's first astronaut, Mr. Garneau soared beyond our world, embodying the spirit of exploration and the pursuit of knowledge. His historic journey inspired a nation and marked a global milestone in our country's scientific achievements. We are still inspired by his wise words about Earth. He said that it is our home and we must take care of it.

Mr. Garneau dedicated himself to public service and this Parliament with resolve and grace. As member and minister, he demonstrated by word and by action that it is possible to go beyond partisanship for the betterment of Canada.

Throughout, he displayed an unwavering commitment to improving life for Canadians. In his quiet way, he stood courageously for his principles, often supporting opposition colleagues with words of encouragement. The NDP especially appreciated his support for better mental health and addictions policies in this House, and he backed that up by voting for those principles, sometimes against his own party.

His leadership was characterized by integrity, rationality and decency. Though possessed of a prodigious intellect, he comported himself with modesty and humour. He was one who truly earned the title "Honourable".

[Translation]

The passing of Marc Garneau is a profound loss for our country.

[English]

We extend deepest condolences to Marc's wife Pam, his children, his family, our colleagues in the Liberal Party and all who were touched by his remarkable life. May his legacy continue to inspire future generations to reach for the stars and to serve with honour.

I thank him and say farewell.

[Translation]

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise today to add my voice to those paying tribute to our dear friend Marc Garneau. It is a big shock that he is no longer with us today.

It was a great honour to work with him. We had been friends for over 14 years. I worked with him here, in the House. When I was elected in 2011, the Conservative Party had a majority government on this side of the House, and Marc was in the corner, because the Liberal Party was the third party in the House. There were only four Bloc Québécois members, and I was in that corner too. We were there in the spring of 2012 when Prime Minister Harper brought in his omnibus Bill C-38 to gut environmental laws. I fought hard against that bill.

● (1540)

I was surprised to learn that it was thanks to Marc Garneau that the Liberal Party gave me its support. Marc supported my efforts and joined my fight against Bill C-38.

[English]

I will never forget how extraordinary it was. He was the leader in the House for the Liberal Party then, and I had gone to the other opposition party leaders. I said to him, “Look, I have about 400 amendments to this, and I have the right to present them at report stage, but I really do not want to do it all by myself because I know it will generate a lot of opposition.” He said, “Let me think about it.”

It was not long, maybe a day, until I found that he had gone to a media scrum and said, “We have decided to support what Elizabeth May is doing with these motions and amendments.” I thought that he could just as easily have taken them and presented them as Liberal amendments. I would never have said anything; I would have been grateful if someone else had taken up the fight. His lack of partisanship in that moment, that willingness to be so generous, was absolutely breathtaking, and it cemented a friendship. I was so very honoured to work with him.

[Translation]

He was a great Canadian, a great member of Parliament and a great man. He also had a remarkable background in science, in addition to his career as an astronaut. As my colleagues have already pointed out, he took part in three space missions.

[English]

When Marc Garneau reflected on that time in space, he said that, the first time in space, “What you aren't ready for—on an emotional and intellectual level—is how looking down at Earth will profoundly affect you.” On this World Environment Day, it seems fitting, and really hard, to say goodbye to someone who was unfailingly kind and unfailingly respectful across party lines.

[Translation]

As my Conservative colleague mentioned, Marc Garneau was known as a true star, an exceptional yet remarkably humble person. I will never forget his last day here; his seat was not far from mine.

[English]

He had to pass by me. He took his leave of this place without this kind of round of speeches, because he did not let us know he was going until one day he stood up and said, “I'll be going now.” He gave a speech, begging us to co-operate more, to be more respectful, and I will never forget it. He packed up his briefcase, buckled

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it, and started to walk past the aisle, past me. I asked him, “Marc, is this it? Are you going today? Is this it?” I threw my arms around him and gave him the biggest hug. It was the last time I saw him. I said, “I'm just going to miss you so much, but let's stay in touch.” I kick myself now. We did not do that so well.

We have lost a very great human being. To his entire family, I send my deepest condolences and sympathy. May they know that in that space where he looks down at planet Earth now, I think it is a place called heaven.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Hon. colleagues, I thank you very much for your words in tribute to our friend and colleague, the Hon. Marc Garneau.

[English]

He was a man for all seasons., a man of sterling integrity, an adventurer and a Canadian hero.

[Translation]

Anyone who had a chance to talk to Marc realized how accomplished he was. Everything he did was at the highest level of excellence.

● (1545)

[English]

He was a scientist, an athlete, a public servant, an opera lover and, as anyone who has read his autobiography, *A Most Extraordinary Ride*, will know, a gifted writer.

[Translation]

He was also a devoted family man. The last time I spoke to him, a year ago, he told me about this book and what it meant for him to write it for his family. I am halfway through the book, and I can hear Marc's voice as I turn the pages. In particular, I hear his sense of humour when he describes his adventures in space and in politics.

[English]

In the book, he recounts where he was for the first moon landing in the summer of 1969. While many of my generation were sitting in front of the television watching a fuzzy picture, Marc Garneau was on a 57-foot sailboat called the *Pickle*. He was part of a crew of 13 in a race from Newport, Rhode Island, to Cork, Ireland, crossing the Atlantic Ocean. He spoke about floating on a tranquil sea, gazing up at the moon in a brilliant night sky, listening to the radio as Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin took their first steps on the moon's own Sea of Tranquility. It was while he floated on a boat, one of the world's oldest forms of transportation, that the seed was planted for him to one day make his own great voyage, in a ship of another kind, into space.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Marc was a man of great courage and conviction. Like every member of Parliament, he brought his own perspective to this place. He was gifted with impressive intelligence and a wisdom that perhaps came from the silence and tranquility of space. Canadians, especially members of Parliament, have all benefited from that wisdom.

[English]

In his final journey, we wish him peace and offer our deepest gratitude. To his family, we present our condolences, and we hope that his extraordinary legacy is a source of comfort and pride.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***STRONG BORDERS ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that 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, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the strong borders act would choke off organized crime groups from profits stemming from drug and firearms, trafficking and human smuggling. We will continue to make the safety and security of Canadians and our country a priority.

Canadians know the true value of the rule of law. We would be protecting that with the bill before us. We are proposing the legislation to ensure that law enforcement and intelligence at all levels would have the tools, authority and resources they need to do their job and to keep pace with new and sophisticated methods used by criminal organizations.

By strengthening our border, we would stamp out the traffic in illegal firearms and fentanyl. New provisions concerning lawful access and intelligence sharing would empower our law enforcement agencies and security agencies to intercept stolen vehicles and dismantle organized crime networks involved in things like extortion and child exploitation. I can assure members that we will never stop putting the safety of our communities first.

Canadians are calling out for decisive action, and we are here to deliver. Already, law enforcement agencies and security organizations are coming out in support of the legislation. For instance, the Canadian Police Association has described Bill C-2's provisions as "crucial" and concluded that, "If passed, this proposed legislation would provide critical new tools for law enforcement, border services, and intelligence agencies to address transnational organized crime, auto theft, firearms, drug trafficking, and money laundering."

The updates would help ensure that Canadian police officers have the tools and intelligence they need to hold offenders accountable regardless of where they operate. The bill is an important first step in the current Parliament's efforts to combat crime. Canadians expect us to act; let us not let them down.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly we all want to cut down on crime and resolve the issues at the border.

As the shadow minister for civil liberties, I have one question for the member. There is a measure in the bill that talks about Canada Post and the employees having the ability to open mail and potentially seize it. In light of our charter right to ensure no unwarranted search and seizure, I wonder what criteria would be applied. What would be the threshold to allow Canada Post workers to do that?

● (1550)

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, if I say it here today, I do not think members and most Canadians would believe it: Even with a warrant, our authorities are unable to search Canada Post mail. The bill would allow the authorities to access a general warrant from a court so they could capture fentanyl or parts being imported to modify guns for people to make their own assault rifles here in Canada.

These are very important measures we need to give law enforcement in order to keep our streets safe. I think Canadians expect us to have these provisions in place.

[Translation]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on my colleague's question.

If this bill moves forward, what criteria would allow Canada Post employees to open mail: suspicion? Reasonable grounds?

[English]

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, the police authorities would have to access a warrant from the court. It would not be the case that Canada Post employees would randomly open up pieces of mail. This would give our policing authorities, the CBSA, and the RCMP in particular, the ability to get a warrant in order to open the mail. It is currently being done with FedEx, Purolator and all other types of mail. The only restriction was with Canada Post, so this would be in line with all the other methods we have in place.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the legislation was introduced just this week, and constituents in the riding of Waterloo have already become very engaged, which speaks to its importance and the need for it. They also hear a lot of the commentary being shared in regard to the charter.

What was exciting today, listening to the debate, was that the opposition, the Conservative Party, on two occasions now, has asked for a charter statement. I remember when our government started with charter statements. They labelled them in many different ways, but today are recognizing the need for us to protect our rights and freedoms, and with rights and freedoms come responsibilities.

My question is one that a constituent in the riding of Waterloo asked, which is whether the secretary of state can just clearly and understandably explain what the legislation would do for Canadians and what it would not do for Canadians.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, that question is excellent. We have been talking about the crime that is prevalent in our communities, like auto theft, as well as criminal organizations trafficking guns, human trafficking, all these different types of things.

This bill would give law enforcement the ability to modernize and keep up with the new techniques that criminal organizations are using, especially those that are exploiting our children. It has been a long time since we have modernized our acts and the authorities that we give law enforcement. I think that is very important.

There are safeguards in place. There are safeguards to each measure. We have to have reasonable suspicion in some cases, and in other cases we have to have court oversight. Courts will oversee this whole process.

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have read Bill C-2. I am going to address gun crime again. Let us get to the facts here. The guns are here and crimes are being committed. People are getting shot. There were records set in my city. I do not read anything in this bill that would curb that.

Will the Liberals repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75? Catching criminals was never the problem; it is keeping them in jail.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in question period today, the provinces have a very important role to play when it comes to the administration of justice. If somebody is a public threat to society, at risk of reoffending or at risk of flight, the law currently states that they should not receive bail. I believe the provinces should also do their part. We are going to do ours.

• (1555)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I rise in debate for the first time in this 45th Parliament, I would like to present colleagues with some statistics about what a rare and unique privilege it is to serve in this place, if they will give me the floor.

Of the millions upon millions of people who have lived in Canada throughout its entire history, fewer than 5,000 individual Canadians have served as members of Parliament. Of that number, fewer than 450 have been women, and of that number, by my count anyway, fewer than 40 Canadian women in the history of our country have been chosen to serve as a member of Parliament for five or more terms.

On April 28, 2025, I was honoured to be re-elected by my constituents and joined the ranks of some of those giants, women like Agnes Mcphail, Flora MacDonald, Ellen Fairclough, Rona Ambrose, Sheila Copps and Alexa McDonough. The gravity and hon-

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our of standing here, once again, is hitting a little harder this time around.

I am here on behalf of, and thanks to, another special and unique group of people, the people of Calgary Nose Hill, who are unique and special in this particular area of Canadian history too. The people I represent, in a riding that has existed for decades, have only ever elected a woman into federal office. Prior to me, my predecessor, Diane Ablonczy, served as a member of Parliament in an even more select group: women who have served as members of Parliament for seven or more terms.

Getting here has meant that I have had to learn a lot of lessons: how to win primaries, the value of having my dogma challenged, how to earn the trust of my community and my colleagues, how to survive being in a government after an election loss and how to thrive in opposition, how to navigate leadership changes, which battles to pick and which ones to walk away from, but most importantly, how to be humble while refusing to let my voice be silenced.

With that, I would like to acknowledge the six other women in the 45th Parliament who are now part of the “been around for a hot minute and have seen some things” five terms or more club: the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, the member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert, the member for Vancouver Centre, the member for Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, the member for Humber River—Black Creek and the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

I thank my husband Jeff, my family, my staff, my volunteers and the good people of Calgary Nose Hill, with a special and deeply profound thanks to Sean Schnell, his wife Leeta and their children Charlize and Easton for bringing me to this place today.

Colleagues, I pledge the true pledge of being a member of Parliament: to do my job, which is to hold the government to account to the best of my ability. Let us begin.

I rise today in debate on Bill C-2, a 160-page omnibus bill from the Liberal government that raises serious concerns about the capacity of the government to address several crises of its own making. These were not problems prior to the Liberal government taking office in 2015: a rapid influx of migrants that Canada's social and economic infrastructure could not sustain; an open and porous border; and an illegal drug production, trafficking and addiction crisis.

I would like to start with the issue of Canada's fentanyl crisis, because it is important context for new colleagues to understand how we got here. A decade of ultra-progressive policies juiced a deadly problem that really came into prevalence in late 2015. At that time, precisely the same time that the Canadian political landscape changed, Liberal prime minister Justin Trudeau had a farther left platform, to put it mildly, than his predecessor government. In 2017, an ultra-left version of the NDP, led by the late premier John Horgan, formed government at the subnational level in the province of British Columbia, the region hardest hit by the drug.

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Prior to 2015, right-of-centre governments favoured a crackdown on criminal activity related to the emerging problem of fentanyl, coupled with enhanced recovery programs for addicts. However, Trudeau's incoming government, as well as Horgan's in British Columbia, all had long-held beliefs that so-called harm reduction, taxpayer-funded hard drugs and the effective legalization of hard drug possession were superior public policy alternatives on hard drug crime to those of their predecessors on the political right. Between 2015 and 2023, these governments went on to usher in a dramatic shift away from government policy that focused on criminalizing hard drug production and trafficking.

• (1600)

At the federal level, the Liberal government expanded access to hard drug injection sites, ended mandatory minimum penalties for major hard drug offences and softened bail criteria for all crimes, including those related to the production and trafficking of hard drugs. A currently sitting Liberal member of Parliament even went as far as to table a bill that aimed to fully legalize all hard street drugs across the country.

Then, in 2021, British Columbia's NDP government formally applied for a subsection 56(1) exemption under Canada's Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, requesting permission to effectively legalize possession of hard drugs, including fentanyl. In early 2022, Trudeau's federal Liberal government approved the request and allowed for a three-year pilot program. The program was expansive. The government even went as far as to set guidelines that would have allowed recreational fentanyl to be legally provided to children. The results were deadly.

There are people across the aisle who will get their backs up on this situation, but it is the reason we have zombie-like people walking across the streets of urban Canada and rural Canada. Our mothers, our daughters, our husbands, everybody from every demographic has been touched by the crisis that was caused by these extremely failed, ill-sighted policies that literally everybody was telling the Liberals were wrong, but they persisted.

Today, we have this omnibus bill in front of us. As the Liberals did in the former Parliament with Bill C-63, the so-called online harms bill, this bill is trying to suggest to Canadians a false dichotomy: that Canadians have to choose between their civil liberties and fixing epic messes with deadly consequences that the Liberal government set up. That is a false dichotomy and something that this place should reject.

I am going to briefly talk about two components of the bill. I am going to talk about some of the border issues and immigration, and then I want to talk about the civil liberties component very briefly.

This bill is a missed opportunity, on the fentanyl and addiction crisis, to address the real problems of how we got here: the Liberals' catch-and-release bail policies. They could have tabled a bill on that, but they did not, so we are now forced to review this omnibus legislation without understanding whether or not the Liberals are going to address the true cause of this problem: the fact that they do not penalize people who produce these drugs.

The Liberals could have increased penalties for people who produce these drugs. As the leader of the Conservative Party said dur-

ing the election, these are mass murderers, and they should be treated as such. The Liberals also failed to put in place compassionate measures that would allow for life-saving intervention for people who have lost agency due to addiction.

These are the measures that we need to actually stop the drug production crisis in Canada. Are there other things? Sure there are. Are there things in this bill that Parliament could look at? Sure, but again, the Liberals have purposely structured a bill where Canadians have to choose between their civil liberties and trying to fix a deadly mess that the Liberals made.

On immigration, here is a little history for colleagues who are new to this place. The Canadian consensus on immigration can be boiled down to this: Do not bring more people into the country than our social and economic infrastructure can handle. By that I mean our health care system, our education system, and our capacity to provide language acquisition and provide jobs and housing as well. That is the basic consensus that our pluralism is based on, because if people are housed, if they have access to work, if they have access to health care and if they can speak one of Canada's official languages, then pluralism can be maintained, but the Liberals broke that promise.

I remember that in 2016, first of all, the Liberal government essentially implied that I was racist for suggesting that the Liberals should not lift the visa requirement on Mexico, because there would be false asylum claims made. Guess what: It was like I was Cassandra, doomed to know the future and have the Liberals call me racist. Honestly, what did the Liberals have to do last year? They had to reverse the visa imposition on Mexico. Then there was the next Cassandra moment. I said that maybe we should not let people who have reached the safety of upstate New York illegally cross the border into Canada and then claim benefits here while their asylum claims, which will likely be rejected, linger for years in Canada's broken asylum system, which the Liberals broke.

• (1605)

I said that maybe we should close the loophole in the safe third country agreement. Once again, the implication was that Canada was anti-immigrant if we were to suggest that we restore order, balance and fairness. There are people who apply legally to come into Canada, who do everything right, are waiting for years and never get the chance to come here, or they want their children to come here. The government essentially rolled out the red carpet at Roxham. There was literally a red carpet with the RCMP pulling the luggage across the border and “#WelcomeToCanada”.

What do members think happened when the Liberals sent the message “#WelcomeToCanada” to people who were already in upstate New York? They enabled an industry of people. There were human traffickers telling people how to make their way into Canada. What happened was that our asylum system was broken. It was abused.

Now, the Liberals have this bill, which has a few minor provisions that would do a couple of things that I am concerned about. It would delegate more authority to the minister in vague ways, and it would delegate more responsibility into regulation. If there are problems with the system, why are they not just laying it out in this legislation to make it clear so that we will not have endless judicial appeals, which is also part of the problem here? People could appeal and appeal because too much authority would be put onto the minister, and there is vagueness and an endlessly changing regulatory structure. That is part of the problem here too. I need to look at this bill in more detail on those provisions to understand what is happening here.

There was the minister's performance in question period. She should get someone to practise with her. This is not going to get easier for her. Seriously, this is too big of an issue. She needs to be able to understand and explain why Canadians should vest more power in a minister who does not even know the numbers that are on her own website.

The bigger problem that I have with the immigration provisions in the bill is that they do not address the bigger problem that is facing Canada's immigration system right now, which is that the government does not track exits. Did members know that the government does not coordinate information to track when people leave the country? It does not publicly disclose when people who are on expired visas, or who have deportation orders, actually leave. There is no way for parliamentarians to look into the data to see whether the government has enabled people to leave the country when they have no legal right to be here.

What happens in that situation? First of all, it sends a message to the world that they can have all of the processing on the front end, but there is no consequence on the back end if they do not have a legal right to be in the country. It incentivizes people to come here because they know the system can be abused.

The second thing that happens is that it pushes people underground. It creates an underground economy. We have to have empathy for people who come to Canada because there is a promise of Canada. We cannot blame the housing crisis, the health care crisis and the jobs crisis on people who are drawn to our country and our pluralism by every promise that makes it good. We have to blame

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the Liberal government for failing the system so badly that people feel their only option is to go underground, into an underground economy where they live in slave-like working conditions.

That happens here in Canada. It happens because the Liberal government has failed so profoundly on this file with minister after minister for a decade. The fact that in this bill the Liberals did not have any sort of plan to departure-track, to coordinate information across departments that already gather this information, and to express to Canadians and people who are here on expired visas how they will enable them to leave the country is only going to exacerbate the problem, particularly with the vagueness in some of these provisions. That is a huge problem. Again, I do not understand why the Liberals would have put in this border component, and all of these missed opportunities and the immigration component with the following.

There are some pretty big poison pills when it comes to civil liberties that every Canadian should be concerned about. If passed, Bill C-2 would allow CSIS, police and peace officers to demand personal information from online service providers without a warrant, based only on vague suspicions of potential crimes or legal breaches based on any act of Parliament.

• (1610)

The Liberals today said that it is not personal information and we should not worry about it, but guess what. Whether or not I use an online service, or where I use an online service, if I depart from an online service, start an online service or use an online service for an amount of time, everything that Bill C-2 says it would do involves my personal information. That is none of the government's business, certainly not without a warrant. There has to be a line drawn here.

The government has severely under resourced our information-gathering departments. Sure, it takes time to get a warrant, but most police departments, after the “defund the police” movement, are so underfunded that they do not have cybercrime units. Now the government is trying to shortcut this by taking away the civil liberties of law-abiding Canadians, and that is not right. At the end of the day, like anything else the government does when it comes to removing civil liberties, it is law-abiding Canadians who get punished, not the criminals.

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When I read this bill, I see a road map of ways for criminals to avoid being tracked on where they could legally do this snooping stuff. What is going to happen? Hardened criminals who understand how to get around the system are going to get around the system, and then a government, which unlawfully used the Emergencies Act, froze Canadians' bank accounts, introduced censorship bills Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, and introduced Bill C-63, wants to insert itself. Can members imagine if the Liberals were to retable Bill C-63, with all of their suspicion of hate crime stuff? That bill would couple with this bill to form a mega Voltron of censorship and oppression. I am not being hyperbolic. The government has, over and over again, at every opportunity, taken away Canadians' freedom of speech. Every bill that it has passed has been designed to control speech. My constituents should not have to make that choice.

I am going to bet I know what happened with this bill. Some of these departments have had this policy sitting on the shelf for literally years and more savvy ministers have said, "Not today." More savvy PMOs have said no, but there is a green minister, a green Prime Minister and a perfect cover, which is the fentanyl crisis. Some bureaucrats said that this is harmonizing with other things and that it is not going to have a big implication on Canadian civil liberties, and these guys fell for it. They did not politically question this. They did not think about what was in the best interests of their constituents.

How do I know that? The Liberals did not put a charter statement in for this. I cannot wait to see that charter statement. It is going to be dance, dance, kitty, dance, I am sure of it. I am positive, because the information that I talked about is personal information. Even if this bill passes, I guarantee it will be challenged all the way up to the Supreme Court.

It is not just that. My colleagues have talked about Canada Post opening mail. Was Canada Post consulted on this provision? I heard it was not. My colleagues heard that Canada Post found out about this after the bill was tabled. How are Canada Post employees going to deal with opening up fentanyl envelopes? That is new. What about the telco companies that this provision would affect? There are things in the bill that give the government unfettered access into telecommunications companies. I am no fan of Canada's telcos' oligopoly, but where we can agree to agree is that I do not want the Liberal government further inserting itself into the management of Canada's telecommunications companies.

There is another concerning component as well, which I saw this morning. The International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group is sounding the alarm about provisions in Bill C-2 with respect to powers to allow the government to request information from foreign entities. This raises an important question: Will the government allow for reciprocal requests from foreign governments? Let us say Bill C-63 were to pass, too. Even if it does not, Bill C-2 can have these snooping provisions and would let foreign governments reciprocate on snooping provisions with all the foreign influence stuff that we have had without a foreign agent registry under this geopolitical situation. The fact that there is nothing in the bill that says what this means is crazy.

Also, the government has not shown Canadians any specific situation, evidence or circumstance in granular detail about why we should be giving up our civil liberties to a government that unlaw-

fully used the Emergencies Act and imposed draconian censorship bills, which resulted in news bans in this country. I will not do it. I think the one thing that all of my colleagues from all opposition parties can agree on is this: There are elements in this bill that are worthy of further study that might help fix the mess that the Liberals have made, but we should not have to choose between civil liberties and keeping our country safe.

• (1615)

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope everybody in the House listens carefully to what my colleague has to say because she has a lot of experience with a lot of legislation and everything that she said is right on the money.

I want to follow up on some of the civil liberties issues she was pointing out and ask her about not only some of the things that are in the bill that impact people's privacy rights but also some of the language in the bill that talks about, if the government suspects money laundering, it could potentially get someone's financial information. This, of course, gives shades of the issue of freezing bank accounts.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, the government put this bill out and did not explain to Canadians specific instances or why Canadians should be giving up these liberties. I do not think we should be giving them up. It is completely unreasonable for the government to say "just trust us" when there is an entire burden of proof that we should not ignore.

I remember the former finance minister, during her description of why the government unlawfully used the Emergencies Act, and she essentially said it was to suspend the rights for financial transactions for Canadians. The whole promise of Canada is freedom, and we do not have—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): We will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is truly amazing that the member stands up with a speech that is literally riddled with conspiracy theories from all extremes. She gives the impression that we are going to have Canada Post workers opening up every envelope. She is saying, "Canadians, be aware that this is going to happen," as though she is giving a warning to every Canadian. She needs to get a grip on real life.

Even the Canadian Police Association has come out saying this is good legislation, and it is looking forward to seeing it pass. The member criticizes and attacks the Minister of Immigration, but she was there when Stephen Harper and Jason Kenney cancelled the parents sponsorship program, not to mention their deleting hundreds of thousands of files that were under process. They had a broken system, too. At least we are trying to balance it. When will the member get real?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, if 2025 me travelled back in time to 2015 and said, “The government is going to use the Emergencies Act to freeze Canadians’ bank accounts and then introduce a bill to criminalize thought crimes and cause news bans,” in 2015, I would have said, “What?” However, that is exactly what happened.

Call me skeptical, but I am saying no to any bill that has provisions that give the government more power to take away my right to free speech and my constituents’ right to free speech.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my colleague shares my concern about the government’s current lax approach to controlling gun trafficking. We know that guns are being smuggled illegally from the United States into our country, mainly in my riding, by waterway.

Does my colleague agree that the Coast Guard should be given greater authority to monitor, document and report to authorities on certain crossings where illegal firearms are smuggled? Would she agree to having this added to the bill?

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are elements of this bill that are worthy of study that could make things safer. The problem is that the Liberals have, once again, forced all of us, including my colleague, into a situation where we are supposed to choose between civil liberties and protecting our constituents.

I am hoping there can be some sort of resolution here that does not involve that choice. I hope the government would be open to looking for ways to do that so some of the components of the bill that could be deemed acceptable could be studied and perhaps passed. For some of this other stuff that is clearly going to cause contention among everybody, perhaps the Liberals should not have put that in the bill.

● (1620)

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent speech. She highlighted that there are many concerns in this bill and that it will trample on people’s civil liberties, privacy, due process and procedural fairness. The powers that are granted in this bill to different authorities include cabinet. They are sweeping, and few details are provided. In addition, it is effectively an omnibus bill.

Does my colleague believe that parts of this bill should be separated out? Clearly, this is a bill the Liberals have thrown everything in. I would like her thoughts on that.

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Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I think we are getting somewhere. I am sure my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois have concerns about some of the deep incursions into provincial jurisdiction as well.

Again, we are getting some consensus in debate, and as with Bill C-63, which had provisions about increased reporting requirements for child pornography, there might be a few things in this bill we can agree to agree on, or at least agree to study. However, there are some that are out of scope and designed to make us choose a false dichotomy.

Hopefully, there can be something that resembles work here and that the government understands it has put a dog’s breakfast forward and can somehow work something out to try again.

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier today during the debate, my Conservative colleague cited crime statistics from 2022, a year when rates were at their peak. However, I find this disingenuous, as crime rates have dropped, especially auto thefts, which dropped in 2024 by 20% nationwide and, per the Toronto Police Service, dropped by 39% in 2025, with a 19% decline in Oakville in 2025.

My constituents know I have been actively advocating on the issue of crime. It is a matter of concern for the residents of Oakville West, and for me as well. During the election I spoke to many constituents, and some were victims of auto theft. Stolen cars are transported across the border, which is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I am sorry, but I need to give time to the member to respond.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone in Oakville West would think that going from absolutely crazy, insane levels of car theft to mucho, extra crazy levels of car theft is acceptable. The problem is that the Liberals are saying there was a drop, but it is still out of control. There are people in Oakville who have to buy bollards to put in front of their cars because their cars get stolen.

The member talked about the detection of cars. The Liberal government cannot detect cars going out of a port. There is drone warfare happening, and we cannot even detect stolen cars in the port of Montreal.

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

Government Orders

I was going to raise a point of order, but I know my colleague is more than capable of dealing with this. The member for Winnipeg North said something that I think was deeply offensive to this House and was completely unparliamentary. He was essentially telling my colleague to get real when all she was doing was citing facts. This is at a time when we were told by a cabinet member that Canada Post would need a warrant to open up mail. I am going to read directly from the bill:

The Corporation may open any mail if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that

It is “reasonable grounds to suspect”, not even to “believe.” He should be apologizing. Shame on him.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I doubt the hon. member my colleague is referring to who made the comment actually read the bill, because he has not. This is what the bill says. As my colleague across the way mentioned, there are some provisions, although not that one, that could ostensibly, maybe, help fix the mess that the Liberals created themselves. However, there are some things in there so egregious that I think the Liberals put them in there specifically as a poison pill. That means they are not serious about solving these issues and want them to continue. If the Liberals were serious about addressing these issues, they would not have put, as they did in Bill C-63, poison pill civil liberties issues in there to bottleneck Parliament.

I encourage all colleagues in this place to go to the minister and say that this is a dog's breakfast. Let us figure this out.

• (1625)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Bourassa.

I am pleased to rise today to talk about the strong borders act. The legislation before the House would strengthen border protection and border security and ensure integrity in the immigration system, with new authorities to improve how client information is shared with provincial and territorial partners; enforce our laws more effectively; and support a sustainable system that restores balance and trust in immigration for Canadians and those seeking to come to our country.

Overall, Bill C-2 would improve the flexibility and responsiveness of the asylum system by creating new ineligibility rules, removing incomplete or abandoned claims in the system and focusing resources on those who need protection the most.

Let me talk about information sharing.

[Translation]

As a former provincial minister of immigration, I know how important it is for the federal government to work with the provinces and territories to develop policies and programs.

When I was minister of immigration in Nova Scotia, I understood how critical partnerships and co-operation between governments were to meeting the needs of employers and communities and supporting diverse groups of people. The information provided by the federal government helps provinces and territories effectively manage their programs and services.

[English]

Let me be clear. This information sharing would, of course, continue to protect the personal information of applicants with strong safeguards. This would include a clear prohibition against provincial or territorial government partners further sharing any information with foreign entities except with the written consent of IRCC, where this would happen in a way that complies with Canada's international obligations.

With respect to the new asylum ineligibilities, to protect our system against surges in claims, we are introducing new ineligibility rules for asylum. Let me be clear once again. Claiming asylum is not a shortcut to immigration. The ineligibilities would reduce pressures on the system so that we can provide protection for those in need efficiently. Under the proposed legislation, the federal government would no longer refer claims to the Immigration and Refugee Board for a decision if claims are made more than one year after someone's first arrival after June 24, 2020, or if claims are made 14 or more days after someone enters Canada irregularly between border crossings.

The one-year limit discourages those wanting to use the asylum system as a way to extend their stay in Canada if other pathways fail. We are a generous country that values fairness, but Canadians expect us not to tolerate those who attempt to use the asylum system to bypass our laws and systems. With respect to the date that was selected, June 24, 2020, let me be clear that it was selected because that was the date the regulations were created to track the exit data.

We are applying the same principle to those who cross the border irregularly. We know that some continue to cross the Canada-U.S. border irregularly despite our warnings and laws. By waiting 14 or more days before filing an asylum claim, they effectively avoid return to the U.S. under the safe third country agreement.

[Translation]

Entering Canada between our points of entry is neither authorized nor safe. We have all seen the tragic loss of life or serious injuries to people who insisted on entering Canada through snow-covered fields, waterways or forests in the middle of winter. Not only are these crossings dangerous, but they are often linked to migrant trafficking and organized crime. They put people, including children, at even greater risk.

I recommend that everyone who wants to come to Canada use our migration channels and programs.

For these reasons, claims filed more than a year after a person first arrives, beginning on June 24, 2020, and those filed 14 days or more after they cross the border illegally will not be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada for a decision.

• (1630)

[English]

These measures would allow our decision-making body, the Immigration and Refugee Board, to focus on making final decisions on genuine claims. These ineligibility rules would protect against potential surges in claims, relieve the pressure on the asylum system and help the IRB work through its existing inventory of pending claims, including from those who genuinely need our protection and support.

We recognize that our system needs to adapt to changing patterns and global migration. We need the system to be adaptable, flexible and responsive to changes so that we can safely manage the flow of people entering our country. In support of Canada's plan to strengthen border security in our immigration system, this legislation would introduce new authorities for Canada to respond to global events quickly and effectively.

When the global pandemic hit in 2020, the federal government was forced to make the difficult decision to close our borders to protect the health and safety of Canadians. While our vetting and review processes are thorough, documented and empowered under the law, we do not have the power to suspend or cancel documents.

[Translation]

Currently, officers have the authority to cancel a visa or electronic travel authorization on a case-by-case basis following a change in the status of the holder or because the holder is no longer entitled to hold the document.

[English]

For example, if it is discovered that an application contains false statements or the applicant has a criminal record or is deceased, the agent would have the power to cancel this document. Right now, that power does not exist.

[Translation]

This power does not apply to groups of immigration documents. This legislation would help Canada better respond to global events like the pandemic by allowing Canadian authorities to suspend, amend or cancel a number of immigration documents at once.

[English]

These authorities would help us protect the public interest, protecting against safety and security threats, health risks and abuse of publicly funded programs. To be clear, there is no plan to cancel the documents of any particular groups. These measures are intended to strengthen the integrity of our immigration system for the future.

The use of any of these authorities would require a separate process. Decisions would have to be driven by evidence and facts and would rest with the Governor in Council, not the minister alone. There are checks and balances in the process to ensure these measures would be used in the public interest of Canadians.

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Through this legislation, the government would improve and streamline our asylum system, strengthen how we work with provinces and territories, support Canada's asylum system, and focus our decisions and resources. We would empower government to respond to changing times quickly.

[Translation]

These processes will be simpler, faster and more targeted. The proposed changes will improve public safety as well as the integrity of our government programs and services.

[English]

There would be fast, fair and final decisions so that our system meets our economic, social and humanitarian objectives.

I encourage all members to support this legislation to move these critical changes forward. I also encourage Canadians to look at the language of the legislation. If members help us put in these changes, we can have a system that we are proud of.

With these words, I am happy to take a few questions.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, millions of people in Canada are here on expired visas or visas that are about to expire. In order to fix the immigration system, the Canadian public should have publicly disclosed information on how many people exit.

Why did the minister not include a departure-tracking mechanism in this bill? Is it because she does not want one?

• (1635)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, I believe we all agree that immigration is key to our economy in Canada and to our communities. As I said in my remarks, the date that was selected for that one-year rule, June 24, 2020, was picked specifically because that is the date that regulations came into effect to track exit data.

[Translation]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister. With regard to asylum claims, I understand that the problem related to the 14-day period has been resolved and that the period from which a claim for asylum can no longer be made has also been limited.

Now we see, at first reading at least, that a new discretionary power has been given to the minister. When an asylum claim is deemed eligible by the officers, the minister has the power to authorize it or reject it before it is referred to the board. That is a new discretionary power for the minister.

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I would like to know where that idea came from.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the challenges facing asylum seekers. That is why we included in the legislation the one-year rule effective June 25, 2020, to make our systems comprehensive and effective. We work very well with the Province of Quebec in these situations.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to help my Conservative friends across the way, and frankly I hope they are listening.

At the end of the day, this is what a real, tangible change means. Let us say we want to take a throne speech document and put it into a yellow envelope. If the member opposite was to do that, he could mail it, and no one has the right to actually open up that envelope today. We could put fentanyl in that envelope, and no one has the right to open it up. The police would have to wait until it hits the home.

This legislation would allow for the police to go and get a warrant that would enable them to open up the envelope. Most Canadians would see that as a positive thing, just like the police do. I am wondering if my colleague would agree that this is a good piece of legislation, and the Conservatives—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order. Can we have a little order here?

The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, allow me to thank the member for Winnipeg North for not only his passion but also his accuracy in the information that he always presents to us in the House. I definitely do agree with him that this is an excellent piece of legislation, and I urge all colleagues in the House to please support it.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have destroyed the immigration system in our country, and that has caused the complete destruction of our housing industry across the country as well.

Will the member apologize for the last 10 years of Liberal failure?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that this new government is here to work with Canadians, and the reduction in the permanent and temporary numbers that has been forecasted was forecasted with the understanding that we do need to reduce our numbers to ensure that our infrastructure meets the challenges of today.

I would like to remind members that COVID put a lot of strain and stress on all the provinces in our country and all our people, so with that in mind, let us all work together and let us all unify Canadians, unify Canada and stay strong.

• (1640)

[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to share some really good news. Two athletes from my riding,

Bennedict Mathurin and Luguentz Dort, have made it to the NBA finals. We are bursting with pride in these young Quebecers from Montreal North. They are of Haitian descent, were born and trained here, on our streets, in our schools and in our parks. This is a great response to people who, like the president of our neighbour to the south, have denigrated communities with Haitian roots. This time, greatness is a 100% Canada-Quebec production made in Bourassa. In addition to these two athletes, I would also like to mention Chris Boucher, past winner of the NBA finals.

This news illustrates the strength of our community's talent, perseverance and pride. These three young people shine and, today, their light is illuminating the world's largest basketball stage. Their journey is an inspiration that drives us to keep investing in our young people, celebrating our local talent and showcasing the riding of Bourassa at home and abroad. Now more than ever, a sports centre is an important and essential asset sorely lacking in Bourassa. The borough is organizing a public screening of the finals at Pilon Park in Bourassa so that we can all share this historic moment. Everyone is welcome to join in this collective outpouring of pride. Fortunately, these young men did not turn to crime as some unfortunately do.

We are talking about crime today, and I want to acknowledge that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety have done careful, concrete work on this. The bill before us is ambitious, pragmatic and, above all, necessary in the current context. It is based on clear and focused SMART principles. It is a clear and effective response to very real threats: drug trafficking, organized crime, money laundering and weaknesses in our intelligence system. This is about more than legislative principles; it is about human lives. In Montreal and other big cities, people want to live in safe, peaceful neighbourhoods free from violence and crime. This bill is not just a legislative exercise; it is a commitment to people's peace of mind.

I will give a few examples. The situation is alarming in our major cities such as Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary. In the greater Montreal area, we are seeing a resurgence of violence and clandestine synthetic drug labs. The chemicals arrive through indirect channels, often by mail or international packages. This bill will allow for better monitoring of these products and rapid intervention by the Minister of Health.

In Toronto, criminal networks are exploiting gaps in data access to operate large-scale fraud and money laundering schemes. Amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, as well as cross-border information-sharing mechanisms, will give our police officers the tools they need to take action. In Vancouver, customs officers are facing an influx of suspicious goods arriving by sea. Amendments to the Customs Act and the Oceans Act will allow for upstream interventions, which I will discuss later. There is a lot of talk about being proactive. In Laval, Ottawa and Halifax, police are struggling to intercept packages containing prohibited substances because of restrictive postal laws. By amending the Canada Post Corporation Act, this bill will finally give them the means to do something about it. We also want to modernize legislation and strengthen operations.

I would like to highlight some aspects of this bill. Bill C-2 aims to clarify exemptions from drug and cannabis laws to better regulate investigative tools. It seeks to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, giving the Minister of Health targeted powers over precursor chemicals. Once again, this is about being proactive. It is essential to take action upstream to stop these precursor chemicals, as they enable clandestine labs to operate. These precursor chemicals are used in the manufacture of fentanyl, for example. The bill seeks to enact the supporting authorized access to information act to ensure that electronic service providers can legally co-operate with investigations.

• (1645)

Access to cross-border data has to be improved, with respect for fundamental freedoms, and the Canada Post Corporation Act has to be amended to allow suspicious mail to be opened within a strict legal framework. Of course, there are a number of concrete measures against money laundering, including restrictions on cash payments and third-party deposits.

As former vice-chair of Montreal's Commission de la sécurité publique, I saw first-hand the challenges that our police services are facing: legal limitations, administrative delays and a lack of coordination between the agencies. The bill addresses many of those gaps. It is not just a technical adjustment but a real strategic shift toward more proactive—as I have pointed out—more coordinated and better equipped public safety. That is why we need to ensure that new powers are balanced with mechanisms for transparency, accountability, and parliamentary oversight.

In conclusion, the bill is a direct response to the everyday problems experienced by our constituents and especially by our police services. Passing the bill will send a clear message that Canada is protecting its borders, its children and its families. In other words, our sovereignty is being exercised in our neighbourhoods, on our streets, in our ports, in our digital networks and in our democratic institutions.

I therefore support this bill with determination, but also with vigilance, to protect our communities, strengthen our security and uphold the values of justice and freedom that make our country, Canada, strong. This is a comprehensive bill that does not include any proposals from the opposition parties, which always come from a silo perspective. It really prioritizes prevention and proactive measures to ensure that Canada is truly safe and secure.

[English]

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously this bill is intended to address some of the crime and fentanyl issues that are happening in the country, but my question really relates to the fact that right now we are not even enforcing our existing laws. We have repeat offenders out on the street, committing gun crimes and committing car thefts, and we are not addressing those. Adding additional laws, if they are not going to be enforced, is not going to really help the situation.

Why did the government not put measures in this bill to address its catch-and-release policies?

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[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, I am simply inviting my colleague to read the document carefully, because the goal is to give our police forces more resources and to facilitate their work and operations. I would also invite her to look at how this bill can be managed in a much more integrated way, rather than seeing it from a silo perspective or from the point of view of a single framework.

That is the problem with the opposition. When work is done, when we take action or table bills, the opposition says that it is not enough. When we put forward a more comprehensive and integrated plan, it says that we are going too far. At some point, we really have to take a stand.

I think that this bill will give our police forces all the resources they need. We will truly be adopting a more proactive and preventive approach, and I think that our streets will be much safer as a result.

I sincerely invite our colleagues to collaborate and to start by reading the bill.

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new member.

He made a comment earlier that really got my attention about how opposition members do nothing but oppose and never propose anything. It is the complete opposite. The Bloc Québécois is known here for being hard-working and thorough, for proposing solutions, for improving things and for co-operating. Perhaps no one informed him of this when he arrived for his orientation. I would simply like to tell him that he can count on us to improve things and make suggestions. Now it is up to the government to listen and implement the opposition's common-sense solutions.

I have a more specific question. My colleague is from a Montreal riding where there are a lot of newcomers and a lot of problems with the immigration department. Can he tell us whether, in his opinion, Bill C-2 will help reduce processing times for refugee claims?

• (1650)

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her welcoming message.

She was correct in saying that we need to listen, but this has to go both ways. That is really important. The Bloc Québécois is known for its proposals on prevention. As I said, this is a much more integrated approach to public safety. It is an approach that includes not only police response, but also a social and humanitarian response regarding our young people. The point is to take preventive action.

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With regard to my colleague's question, it is integrated as I said. The immigration process really needs to be streamlined to make it simpler and faster. This is desirable because when we welcome these people, we have to do it properly. It is really important to ensure that the process is not slow, because that also has an impact on their mental health, which hinders their integration.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that this is Bill C-2, in the sense of it being a priority. It demonstrates very clearly how the Prime Minister and this government recognize our borders as an important issue. They are secure today, but this will make them even that much stronger. As we always continue to espouse, we want a stronger, healthier Canadian border.

I wonder if the member can provide his thoughts. This is an important piece of legislation, and that is why it is Bill C-2.

[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, one thing to remember is that this is not something the government is doing in isolation. It is not just a single initiative, but rather an integrated approach. This will obviously include more border measures. I hope that the work will be done upstream not just with respect to the borders, but also to drugs.

[English]

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your appointment.

This is my first substantive opportunity to speak in the 45th Parliament. Before I speak on Bill C-2 today, allow me to begin with a few words of thanks. I thank my election campaign team for their commitment, their long hours and their belief in what we stand for. Every door they knocked and every conversation they had helped bring us here.

I thank my family, my spouse Angela and my twin daughters Jennie and Emma, for their love and patience. This job is demanding; it takes me away from home, from holidays and from dinners, but their support never wavers, and I am forever grateful for it.

I thank the great people of Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations for trusting me to be their voice in Parliament. I carry their hopes, frustrations and priorities into everything I do in this place. They have given me a mandate to be their voice, their advocate and their defender. I carry that duty into this chamber with great responsibility and deep humility.

Now, let us get to the heart of this bill, but more importantly, let us get to what is missing from it. While the government may be eager to pat itself on the back, Canadians deserve to know that this bill stops short of promises made in the Speech from the Throne and doing what is actually needed to protect them.

In the throne speech, the government said it would bring a renewed focus on car theft and home invasions by toughening the Criminal Code to make bail harder to get for repeat offenders charged with committing these crimes, along with human trafficking and drug smuggling. However, none of this is to be found anywhere in all 172 pages of this bill. It is as if the Liberals have been

tone-deaf to the pleas of premiers, law enforcement and victims who have been demanding bail reform for well over three years. While there are pieces that may be helpful, these are small steps in a system that is already broken at its foundation after a decade of soft-on-crime laws.

This bill may tighten a few screws around the edges, but it ignores the structural damage done by the Liberals' own justice reforms. It does not touch bail, not once. There is not a word about repealing or reforming the principle of restraint that is allowing repeat violent offenders back out on the street before the ink is even dry on their charge sheets. There is not a word about empowering Crown attorneys to actually keep dangerous individuals behind bars. There is not a word about protecting victims from seeing their attacker back in their neighbourhood hours after an arrest.

That revolving door opened by Bill C-75 is still spinning, and this bill does nothing to stop it. It does not touch sentencing either. The Liberals talk a big game about cracking down on traffickers, smugglers and organized crime, but they have kept in place their signature legislation, Bill C-5, which stripped away mandatory minimum sentences for the very criminals they now claim to be targeting.

The bill does not bring back any of those minimums. It does not impose serious time for serious crimes. It does not deliver justice for the victims who have been left behind, even in the middle of a national fentanyl crisis that is taking thousands of Canadian lives every single year. Those traffickers are pumping lethal drugs into our communities. Often, those with links to organized crime and foreign cartels are still eligible for a light sentence or, in some cases, conditional releases that are a form of house arrest. It certainly does not send a message to the organized criminals who are exploiting our legal system, flooding our streets with fentanyl and laundering their dirty money across borders that their time is up. This is a missed opportunity, a chance to clean up the mess the Liberals created.

Here is the reality right now in Canada: Violent crime is up 50% in this country; homicides, up 28%; sexual assaults, up 74%; auto theft, up 46%; extortion, up a whopping 357%; gang-related homicides, up 78%; violent crimes with guns, up 116%; terrorism charges, up 488%; and hate crimes have more than tripled. Those are the tragic stats that show the disheartening reality right now in this country.

● (1655)

While the crime crisis sweeps across our country, what this bill would really do, beneath all the legal jargon and bureaucratic language, is keep the worst parts of the Liberals' justice record firmly intact. It would keep Bill C-75, the law that tied the hands of police and prosecutors and told judges to favour release over detention, even when dealing with repeat violent offenders. It would keep the so-called principle of restraint that has allowed known gang members, gun criminals and repeat abusers to walk free even before officers finish their paperwork. It told Canadians that violent history does not matter and that past behaviour should not prejudice future bail decisions. What has been the result? Repeat offenders are back on our streets, and arrests made in the morning have criminals out before the officer even finishes their shift. However, the bill does not touch that law. It would keep it in place, and by doing so, it keeps that revolving door spinning.

The bill keeps Bill C-5, the Liberals' flagship soft-on-crime legislation that wiped out mandatory minimum sentences for some of the most serious offences in the Criminal Code. We are talking about drug trafficking, gun smuggling, armed robbery and repeat violent offences. Instead of sending a message that these crimes carry consequences, Bill C-5 said they might be eligible for house arrest, which is the message fentanyl dealers and gang leaders heard loud and clear. Now, even in the middle of the worst drug crisis our country has ever seen, the government refuses to put those minimums back in place. The very offenders we should be locking away are still being given second, third and fourth chances, and the government calls that justice.

While the bill claims to be a response to growing threats at the border from organized crime and transnational drug trafficking, it does not say a single word about reversing the same Liberal policies that got us here in the first place. We can tighten customs inspections, but if the trafficker is still released on bail within 24 hours, if the fentanyl producer still walks away with time served, if the gun smuggler knows there is no minimum sentence waiting at the end of the line, then what exactly are we doing as legislators? Without serious bail reform, mandatory minimums and real consequences for serious crimes, the system is still broken. These are the same policies that let fentanyl traffickers off.

Fentanyl is a public health crisis. It is a criminal epidemic being driven by organized crime, enabled by weak laws and made worse by a justice system that fails to deliver real consequences. We are losing more than 20 Canadians every single day to opiate overdoses, and fentanyl is at the centre of it. It is cheap, it is lethal, it is everywhere, and behind almost every fatal dose is a trafficker, a producer or a cartel that profits from death and misery. Despite the crisis, the bill says nothing, would do nothing and would fix nothing when it comes to holding fentanyl traffickers truly accountable.

Let me remind the House of what happened last year in Falkland, British Columbia, where the RCMP dismantled the largest and most sophisticated illegal drug lab ever uncovered in Canadian history. What they found was shocking: 54 kilograms of finished fentanyl, 390 kilograms of methamphetamine, 89 illegal firearms and half a million dollars in cash, all inside a rural compound operating under the radar. To put that seizure into perspective, those 54 kilo-

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grams of fentanyl were enough to create over 95 million lethal doses. That is enough to kill every Canadian in this country twice over.

This was not a low-level street dealer. This was not some desperate individual struggling with addiction. This was a high-level, professional drug-production operation. It had all the markings of transactional organized crime, and the RCMP confirmed direct links to Mexican cartels, the same cartels responsible for mass killings, political assassinations and destabilizing entire countries. Now they are operating here on Canadian soil, building superlabs and churning out poison every day. Still, there is no mention in this bill of mandatory life sentences for those who operate fentanyl labs capable of killing millions.

● (1700)

The message is clear here. Prior to the passage of Bill C-5, there was a mandatory minimum penalty for those producers, those manufacturers, those importers, those exporters and those traffickers. However, according to the soft-on-crime Liberal government, that was too draconian a law; it had to be repealed.

There has been no effort to bring back mandatory minimum sentences for large-scale drug production or trafficking. There is no recognition in this bill that Canada's criminal justice system needs to change to meet the scale and violence of this threat. What message does that send? To the cartels watching us from across the border, it says that Canada is easy money. The low- and mid-level traffickers in this country have a big smile on their face now that the weak, soft-on-crime government is back in Ottawa. To the fentanyl traffickers, it says that they will get a deal, maybe even a conditional sentence. To the victims, to the thousands of parents burying their children, to the first responders administering naloxone day after day, to the communities being hollowed out by addiction and death, it says that their pain is not enough to warrant serious change by the weak government. That is not acceptable.

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When a criminal operation can manufacture enough fentanyl to wipe out the entire country and still not face life in prison, something is deeply broken. Criminals have taken note. The RCMP says there are now more than 2,000 organized crime groups operating in this country. What good is controlling fentanyl precursors if we are not throwing the book at the criminals making it? What good is data sharing if repeat offenders are out on bail before the paperwork is even processed? What good is fighting crime on paper if the sentences handed down in court do not match the seriousness and the moral culpability of the offender?

This bill is a good starting point, but it is simply not enough. For all the government's talk and for all the legal language and administrative tweaks buried in all 127 pages, the bill still fails to deal with the single most urgent problem we face in this country: violent, repeat offenders who face no real consequences under the government's so-called justice reforms. This is the crisis Canadians live with every single day on their streets, on their transit systems, in their neighbourhoods and in their homes. Canadians are seeing criminals cycle in and out of jail like it is a revolving door, and we are being told that is progress.

Canadians do not want more promises with headlines; they want results. They want their kids to walk to school without fear. They want fentanyl dealers to face real prison time, not house arrest and a slap on the wrist. They want to see gang members and gunrunners behind bars, not out on bail within hours. They want a justice system that puts their safety first, not a system that prioritizes the release of repeat offenders.

The bill does not deliver. Instead, it leaves untouched the broken laws that started this crisis and refuses to bring back protections that Canadians and law enforcement have been demanding for years. Canadians have a right to ask, why have the Liberals not brought back mandatory minimums for fentanyl traffickers? After the largest fentanyl bust in Canadian history, with enough poison to kill the entire population, why are life sentences still off the table? Why is the principle of restraint, which prioritizes releasing offenders over protecting communities, still baked into our bail system? How many more innocent Canadians need to be attacked, robbed or killed before the government admits that its soft-on-crime approach has significantly failed Canadians? Why are we tiptoeing around the rights of traffickers, gang members and repeat violent offenders while law-abiding citizens pay the price in blood, trauma and fear?

The bill focuses on border security and public safety, but it completely fails to deliver on core fundamentals.

• (1705)

Conservatives have long called for decisive action to protect Canada's borders. For years, we have urged the Liberals to fix the border crisis that they created, yet they have ignored the warnings and failed to act. The fundamentals are clear. If we want safer communities, we need tougher sentences for serious crimes. If we want to stop organized crime, we need real punishment for drug traffickers, not plea deals. If we want to stop repeat violence, we need to end the revolving door of bail. Most importantly, if we want to restore trust in our justice system, we need to stop coddling criminals and start standing up for victims.

The bill, unfortunately, does none of those things. It fixes the optics but leaves the core problem untouched. It offers minor changes when what we need is structural reform. It fails to reverse the damage done by Bill C-75 and Bill C-5. It fails to recognize that organized crime is not a future threat; it is here now and has been for many years. It fails to respond to the fentanyl crisis with the seriousness it demands. It fails to protect Canadians while crime surges in every category.

Canadians are demanding real change, and they are right to. Mandatory minimums must be restored for serious gun and drug offences. Fentanyl traffickers and cartel-connected criminals should face mandatory life in prison, no exceptions, full stop. The so-called principle of restraint has to be repealed so repeat violent offenders stay behind bars, where they belong. What this country needs is a justice system that protects victims, enforces accountability and puts public safety first, before political ideology, because keeping Canadians safe is not negotiable. It is the prime responsibility of a government.

Conservatives are committed to real, results-driven public safety measures. That means securing our borders, closing loopholes in our immigration system and shutting down the financial lifelines of terrorism and organized crime. Let us not forget why we are here in the first place. The bill only exists because of 10 years of Liberal inaction. The bill only exists because they have problems dealing with the American administration to the south. For a decade, they have watched crime rise and courts weaken.

Since the Liberals took office, illegal border activity has not just risen; it has exploded. There has been a 632% increase in U.S. border patrol encounters with people crossing illegally from Canada. That is not just a stat; it is a failure of national security. It is what happens when the government refuses to enforce its own borders and lets crisis become the norm, the status quo. The Liberals say they are investing \$300 million in border security, but where is it? There is no rollout plan, no timeline and no public accountability, just more vague promises. Canadians are tired of the talk. Opposition members are tired of this talk. They want action. They want to see trust.

We cannot protect Canadians by turning law-abiding citizens into suspects. The expanded surveillance powers in this bill raise very serious privacy concerns. Conservatives will ensure that in the name of security we are not trampling on the rights of innocent Canadians. We can be tough on crime without being reckless at the same time with civil liberties. Our job does not end at opposing what is wrong. It is about pushing for what is right.

Conservatives will keep fighting for real protection at our borders, stronger enforcement at our ports, and sentencing that reflects the seriousness of the crimes Canadians face. The goal is not just to punish crime; it is to prevent it and to restore trust in a system that too often lets people down. Justice in this country should not be optional. Public safety should never be negotiable, and the rights of law-abiding Canadians must always come before the rights of repeat offenders.

• (1710)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member hardly spoke about anything that is in this bill. I think he is awaiting the forthcoming justice bill that we will introduce. I believe he could use this speech at that time, because the justice bill will include many of these measures.

I do want to talk about some things that we can constructively work on. One thing is that this bill exists because there were gaps. These gaps also existed under previous Conservative governments. Under previous Conservative governments, there was no limit on how much cash could be spent on goods in this country. There were not these provisions. There were the same immigration rules. This bill exists because this new Liberal government is getting tough on crime and recognizes that we need to fill the gaps in order to keep Canadians safe.

Would the member agree?

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely laughable whenever my colleagues and I hear about this brand new Liberal government. The member who just asked me the question has been here since 2015. She is not new, and 90% of that bench is all old. It is being controlled by the same Liberal operation that has been in existence since 2015. When are they finally going to start to reflect, look at themselves in the mirror and say, “We have failed Canadians. We have let them down. We failed to protect our borders. We have let repeat violent offenders in and out of the criminal justice system,” and blame themselves?

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Shame on them for blaming Stephen Harper and the past Conservative government, which actually cared about victims over the rights of criminals.

[Translation]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague, who is very critical of the bill.

One of the things he talks about is the importance of cracking down on fentanyl trafficking. What we see in the bill is that the Canada Post Corporation Act will now allow people who work for Canada Post to open not only parcels, but also letters, when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that something is not right.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that. Does he see this as a potentially useful way to more effectively crack down on trafficking, particularly fentanyl trafficking?

[English]

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, I know some members on the Liberal bench are tired of hearing this, but it is important to frame the response—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, the member for Waterloo loves to chime in, and maybe she will get the opportunity to ask me a question, but perhaps she can show me the courtesy of actually letting me respond to the question without being chirped and interrupted.

In my previous capacity, not only was I a prosecutor, but I was a defence counsel. I will fight with every last breath for the charter rights and freedoms of every Canadian. What I find very concerning is that there ought not to be a choice, as the government has framed in Bill C-2, between the protection of civil liberties and law enforcement.

I am sure I am going to hear a question about how all the police associations are in favour of Bill C-2. Of course they are. They have been pleading and begging for some legislative relief from the government for 10 years, so it is one small step—

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions and comments.

The honourable member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on his excellent work on this.

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One of the things I noticed while talking to people in my riding and in other places during the election was how frustrating it is for people who work in law enforcement when they see the failures on crime of the Liberal government. There are people who go out and work hard every day, risking their lives to try to keep the rest of us safe. When they catch someone involved in crime, very often they are released on bail, even if it is a repeat violent offender.

I wonder if the member can share a little about how the approach the Liberals have taken is impacting law enforcement and what the response has been to the actions of the government by those who work on the front lines.

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as the shadow critic for justice and the Attorney General, which is a position that I have had for almost a year now, I have had the opportunity to travel right across this great country. I have spoken with local law enforcement. I have spoken with presidents of police associations. I have spoken with chiefs. I have spoken with provincial and territorial attorneys general. They are all unanimous in their frustration with the Liberal government. The Liberal government promised them real, substantive bail reform and was so proud when Bill C-48 was passed into law, which was nothing more than a band-aid on a serious issue. People are frustrated. They are demoralized. They want more relief, which the government refuses to give.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I regret that the member feels that he is being chirped. I was actually just participating in the comments that were being shared.

Where I am coming from is that the legislation, at least in the riding of Waterloo, is not a monolith of voices. People are interested in the legislation.

Today we heard speeches from colleagues from the Conservative Party, as well as from the Bloc, suggesting that the legislation did have some validity. Amendments could be considered, but there was value to the legislation; it just is not exactly in the way that some members would like to see it. I recognize that there is more work to do, but I would like to ask whether the member thinks there is merit to the legislation. If police associations are asking for it and we are providing it, is there merit to the legislation? Should we try to make it better?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, now you see the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations has the floor.

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my response to the last question, law enforcement has long asked for a number of legislative reforms. What Bill C-2 would do is move the needle ever so slightly by expanding the search powers that police officers have when they are investigating sophisticated, transnational, organized crime entities like the fentanyl traffickers I talked about, but still at the expense of civil liberties.

The government still has not produced a charter statement, which is astonishing. Defence lawyers are laughing; they are going to be

smiling all the way to the bank as they launch charter challenge after—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The member for Courtenay—Alberni has time for a 30-second question.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard that the government has announced a fentanyl czar, and it has had an auto theft summit. I am not saying those are not important, but the Liberals still have not named a czar to help support people living with addiction. They still have not announced a plan on how they are going to create treatment-on-demand. They still have not had a summit on the toxic drug crisis, despite the loss of over 50,000 Canadians.

Does my colleague agree that those also need to be a priority when it comes to this discussion?

• (1720)

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, where is the minister for addictions? We had one in the 44th Parliament, but it is clearly not a priority for the Prime Minister and his so-called new government.

As I indicated in my speech, there is a national fentanyl crisis. People are dying every day. There is blood on the hands of all Liberal members for showing such disrespect to the people struggling with these addiction matters. There needs to be adequate representation at a national level.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague is deeply concerned about the issue of firearms.

Bill C-2 talks about giving more power to the Coast Guard to document and observe situations and share that information with the authorities. Does my colleague think this is a good tool for combatting illegal gun trafficking?

[English]

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, yes, I do believe that there is value in arming our Coast Guard with additional powers. I toured the port of Vancouver recently, and I was appalled to learn of the clever ways that criminals and organized crime are smuggling drugs and weapons across our border with basically zero ability for the Coast Guard and law enforcement—

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

Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Richmond East—Steveston.

As I rise in the House today to deliver my maiden speech, I do so with deep humility and heartfelt gratitude. On April 28, the people of Winnipeg West honoured me by placing their trust in me once again and electing me to be their voice in this esteemed chamber. Having served from 2015 to 2019, returning to the chamber is more than just a homecoming; it is a renewed call to service. I am profoundly thankful to the constituents of Winnipeg West for entrusting me with the privilege of representing them, and for allowing me to champion their causes, advocate for them and bring attention to the pressing issues facing our community.

I would like to give special thanks to my wife, Sowmya. From my very first campaign in 2015 to my return in 2025, she has been my constant source of encouragement, strength and support, and, yes, I have already apologized for, once again, leaving her with the unfortunate duty of dealing with our cats' litter box.

As I reflect on the journey that brought me here, I must take a moment to recognize the extraordinary volunteers of Winnipeg West. Their dedication, passion and tireless efforts were the heartbeat of the campaign. As I juggled emergency department shifts alongside the campaign, it was our incredible volunteers who carried the torch and kept us moving forward. From door knocking with me in snowstorms to making countless phone calls, organizing events and spreading our message, they showed up day after day with purpose and resolve. The campaign simply would not have been possible without them, and I am endlessly grateful for their steadfast belief in our shared values and vision for a stronger, more inclusive Canada.

Having practised emergency medicine in Winnipeg for over 25 years, I have always believed that a fundamental duty of a society is for us to look out for one another. I had a personal experience that tells me what that means. In 2022, while visiting Vancouver, I suffered a sudden cardiac arrest while running in Stanley Park. I survived because complete strangers stepped in, performed CPR on me for 25 minutes and administered two shocks with a defibrillator before paramedics rushed me to St. Paul's Hospital, where I underwent emergency coronary bypass surgery. I was discharged a week later, and the total medical bill to me was zero dollars.

That experience reaffirmed something deeply meaningful: This is what Canada is all about, a country where people step up for each other and a place where our public institutions are there to care for those in need without asking whether they can pay. This is the Canada I believe in and the Canada I am committed to helping preserve.

Winnipeg West is a unique riding, a place where diversity, resilience and unity come together. What sets the community apart is its blend of urban vibrancy and rural character. While rooted in the west end of Winnipeg, our riding also stretches across municipalities like Headingley and Rosser, each with its own identity, history and contribution to the fabric of Manitoba.

From thriving suburban neighbourhoods to family-run farms and tight-knit rural communities, Winnipeg West represents a microcosm of the province itself: diverse, connected and grounded in shared values. Our riding of Winnipeg West is a true reflection of prairie pragmatism, a place where politics are not measured by headlines but by results. In my riding, people are less concerned

with partisan politics and are more focused on real, tangible solutions that improve everyday life. Whether it is advocating for affordability measures, improved infrastructure in our municipalities or support for small businesses and the local agriculture sector, residents want action that makes a difference.

Our riding has long been a political battleground, not because it is divided but because its people are engaged, thoughtful and principled. There, people do not hesitate to ask the hard questions, challenge assumptions and expect their elected representatives to earn their trust every single day. This spirit of democratic engagement is not only a cornerstone of Winnipeg West; it is also a strength of our democracy, and it is a responsibility I carry with great humility and purpose.

In last week's Speech from the Throne, our government laid out a bold and unifying vision: to build one strong Canadian economy out of 13, and to position Canada as the strongest economy in the G7. At a time when we are facing significant generational challenges, including mounting economic pressures from our closest ally, the United States, our government remains focused on delivering real, tangible results for Canadians.

● (1725)

This means making life more affordable for Canadians by implementing targeted measures like the middle-class tax cut that puts more money back into the pockets of people in communities like Winnipeg West, tackling the housing crisis head-on by accelerating home construction at a pace this country has never seen before, and investing in critical infrastructure and nation-building projects that will drive long-term economic growth and unlock new opportunities for every generation of Canadians.

One of the key pillars of the plan is securing our borders, as to be truly strong, Canada must be secure. Border security is critical, not only to ensuring public safety but also to safeguarding our economic prosperity and national sovereignty. That is why, earlier this week, the Minister of Public Safety introduced Bill C-2, the strong borders act, a comprehensive piece of legislation aimed at strengthening Canada's border integrity and enhancing our capacity to respond to evolving security threats.

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The strong borders act would build upon Canada's \$1.3-billion border plan, the largest single investment in border security in Canadian history. Bill C-2 proposes important measures to modernize our border infrastructure, improve information sharing among Canadian agencies, preserve the integrity of our immigration and asylum systems, and prevent the unlawful movement of goods and people across our borders. It also addresses growing concerns about the illegal fentanyl trade, transnational organized crime, money laundering and terrorist financing, all of which pose serious risks to both our public health and national security. With the legislation, we would be reaffirming our commitment to a secure, resilient and sovereign Canada.

In my riding of Winnipeg West, home to the Winnipeg Richardson International Airport, the proposed changes would have a direct and positive impact. The bill would help strengthen frontline operations and would ensure law enforcement agents are equipped with the right tools to secure our borders and carry out their duties more effectively, while ensuring accountability and transparency.

As I conclude my remarks today, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the devastating wildfires currently sweeping across Manitoba. This year's wildfire season has escalated with unprecedented speed and intensity, displacing thousands of families and putting many first nations communities at serious risk. With a provincial state of emergency now in effect, countless Manitobans have been forced from their home and are facing profound uncertainty and loss. My thoughts are with everyone affected by the crisis.

In response to urgent requests from the province, the federal government acted swiftly by deploying the Canadian Armed Forces to support evacuation efforts and ensure the safe relocation of residents. Multiple agencies and organizations are working around the clock in close coordination, to deliver critical aid and assistance on the ground. To support recovery efforts, the Government of Canada has also committed to matching donations to the Canadian Red Cross campaigns, offering Canadians a way to stand in solidarity with those who have lost so much.

Finally, I am thankful to all the brave heroes on the front lines: first responders, firefighters, volunteers, humanitarian workers and the local community leaders. Their courage, compassion and unwavering dedication are a source of strength for the entire community. In the face of hardship, they remind us what it means to be truly united.

• (1730)

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, one has only to look at the member's Twitter feed to understand that he is a big fan of the most unpopular prime minister in recent memory, Justin Trudeau, and his policies on an unsecured border, a lack of safety on the streets, the carbon tax, etc.

How does the member for Winnipeg West feel, knowing that the Liberal Party had to walk away from his record as a former member of Parliament and from that of his mentor, Justin Trudeau, just to get re-elected in Parliament?

Doug Eyolfson: Madam Speaker, I was very supportive of many of the policies that were undertaken by former prime minister Justin Trudeau. I am certain he saved countless lives in Canada through

the pandemic and brought us through one of the fastest economic recoveries in the G7. I make no apologies for that. However, it is a new time and new challenges, and I am here to continue working on these challenges.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I congratulate the member on his election.

Canada prides itself on being a country that respects people's civil liberties, but the bill proposes sweeping powers for authorities. Can the member share with us how the bill will protect people's civil liberties while ensuring that arbitrary decision-making is not being done by the authorities through the bill?

Doug Eyolfson: Madam Speaker, I share the hon. member's concern for the protection of civil liberties. These powers for increased surveillance are all under judicial oversight. Postal workers would not be opening mail. This would be done by the police with warrants. The changes to the immigration system would still be subject to review to make sure that people's fundamental civil liberties are protected.

Ginette Lavack (St. Boniface—St. Vital, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Winnipeg West on his maiden speech and his election to the House of Commons.

You spoke earlier about health care and how important it was for you in Canada to have access to the health care that we have—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I would say to the hon. member, before she starts in that vein, never to direct a comment directly to the other member, but to speak through the Chair.

[*Translation*]

Ginette Lavack: Madam Speaker, I apologize.

I would like to ask my colleague from Winnipeg West the following question.

[*English*]

The member made comments on the health care system and how he was very thankful that it exists in Canada the way it is today. What would he say about the measures this government has put in place to help support Canadian families with respect to health care?

Doug Eyolfson: Madam Speaker, I was proud to have been part of some of the improvements made by this government in the 2015 mandate, including the report that was the building block of our pharmacare program.

We have also gone forward with the co-operation and valuable help of our NDP colleagues with the Canada dental care plan.

We also had the Canada child benefit, which decreased poverty across Canada. Poverty, as we know, is one of the prime drivers of ill health.

• (1735)

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member opposite just mentioned he was very supportive of a great many of Justin Trudeau's policies. I wonder if one of those was the consumer carbon tax, knowing that it was in full force when he was nominated as a Liberal candidate last October.

Doug Eyolfson: Madam Speaker, the carbon tax, in its time, was something I supported. It did what it was supposed to have done. It was a victim of misinformation, and we know—

An hon. member: It is not at all misinformation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Order.

Doug Eyolfson: Madam Speaker, that is exactly what I said, and I stand by it.

We knew that this policy could not recover, given the misinformation surrounding it.

Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise here today recognizing that we stand on the traditional territories of the Algonquin nation. I want to congratulate you for your role again here as Assistant Deputy Speaker.

We are debating Bill C-2, which would enact several legislative amendments, including important measures to help detect, deter and disrupt cross-border money laundering and terrorist financing networks. These are matters of utmost importance to our country, particularly British Columbia and my hometown, Richmond, a gateway city that is integral to our economy.

I want to take a quick moment before I speak to the bill; this is my first intervention, although I did have an opportunity to give a statement. I want to take a moment to thank everyone from Richmond East—Steveston for putting their trust in me and supporting me once again: my campaign team and the hundreds of volunteers and supporters who worked tirelessly because they believed in me and the very important work our new government set out to do—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, there is also the work I did with the member across, but I did not catch what he said. We spent some time on the mighty OGGO committee, and I know he probably wants to see me there again.

Everyone in this House knows the sacrifices families make for us to be here, and their strength helps us do the important work we all do. I remember my wedding day 23 years ago. In my reception toast to my wife, Gurpreet, I said that she makes me a better person. Without her support, I would not be here.

My kids, Hasina and Daya, stepped up and they pounded the pavement. My sister, Nav, knocked on thousands of doors once again. She is the best sister in the world, always ready to stand up for her little brother. Of course, I can never forget the sacrifices my parents made. My dad, like so many Canadians, left his homeland at a young age to make a good life here. He worked as a steelworker in England and then in Canada, and he was a dump truck owner-operator. He worked hard. My mom worked tirelessly as a seniors

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care aide. We had a very modest upbringing with endless opportunities before us, so I thank them and I love them.

Going back to the bill, it is a huge honour to represent the city that raised me and, most importantly, to be their voice in this House to talk on this today, Bill C-2, with respect to the strong and effective anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing measures included in it. They are integral components of a secure Canada-United States border. These measures not only protect our financial system but also safeguard our communities from the devastating impacts of crime and terrorism.

Money laundering supports and perpetuates crimes by allowing criminals, such as fentanyl traffickers, to benefit from their illicit activities. Terrorist financing enables terrorist activities in Canada, the United States and abroad, posing a significant threat to global security. To combat these threats, Canada has established a robust anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime, underpinned by federal statutes, including the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act.

Banks and other businesses and professionals with obligations under this act are on the front lines of the fight against financial crime. The bill would require that these businesses and professionals report certain financial transactions to the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, as well as implement compliance programs to identify clients, monitor business relationships and keep records.

Over the last few years, the centre has identified an alarming trend regarding the difficulties reporting entities are having in maintaining effective anti-money laundering controls, as have our partners in markets where Canadian institutions operate. This led the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada to issue its largest-ever administrative monetary penalties in 2023 and 2024.

The government takes financial crimes seriously. If left unchecked, these kinds of deficiencies risk undermining the effectiveness of the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act in the fight against financial crimes.

• (1740)

The bill proposes a comprehensive set of amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and its regulations to ensure reporting entities maintain strong controls that are effective in detecting and deterring money laundering and other financial crimes. The first part of these measures includes strengthening the administrative monetary penalty framework, enhancing the compliance of reporting entities, more effectively punishing serious criminal non-compliance and strengthening supervision and the anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing framework in general.

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These changes are needed to ensure strong anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing controls, as well as that non-compliance is not treated as the cost of doing business. Recent trends also highlight the importance of close coordination between the financial sector regulators. In December 2024, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada signed a memorandum of understanding with regulators in the U.S. to ensure strong money laundering controls of cross-border banks.

In Canada, the Financial Institutions Supervisory Committee facilitates consultation and the exchange of information on matters relating to the supervision of federal financial institutions. Making the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada a member of this committee would enable better coordination across agencies in Canada in fighting financial crimes.

Ensuring strong controls of reporting agencies is necessary but not sufficient in our fight against financial crime. We must also take decisive action to directly target the evolving means and methods used by criminals to launder their illicit proceeds. British Columbians know the harms money laundering can cause. Five years ago in Richmond, the operator of an underground bank was shot and killed in broad daylight. In response to this and other concerns about money laundering in B.C., the provincial government established the Cullen commission. The measures proposed in the bill would complement the commission's recommendations to the province.

Of course, British Columbians are concerned about another matter addressed by Bill C-2, fentanyl trafficking and other profit-driven crimes. These criminal activities generate large cash proceeds, and cash remains a preferred method of payment for criminals as it is autonomous and easily transferable. Organized crime networks and drug traffickers exploit money mules to make small deposits in cash in multiple accounts at numerous financial institutions to avoid detection and mandatory reporting.

Criminals also launder their illicit cash proceeds through the purchase and resale of luxury and high-value goods, as well as through large cash payments to service providers who are controlled or influenced by a criminal organization. Large cash payments for goods or services may also be used to evade taxation. For these reasons, many countries, including the United States and other G7 partners, maintain restrictions on large cash transactions.

The second part of the financial crime amendments in the bill addresses the use of cash for money laundering by prohibiting the acceptance by businesses and other professionals of cash payments, deposits or donations over \$10,000, except by regulated deposit-taking institutions; and prohibiting deposits by individuals who are not the owner of the account, i.e., third party deposits.

In 2025 and 2026, Canada will undergo an international peer review by the Financial Action Task Force, the international anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing standard-setting body. The proposed measures would help address issues identified by the Financial Action Task Force and support a positive review.

The bill is a key part of the government's agenda, and I urge my hon. colleagues to join me in supporting its quick passage. I am happy to take any questions.

• (1745)

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is an important public safety bill before the House.

I do want to ask a question about money laundering and foreign interference. The fact is that a lot has been written about foreign interference in the member's riding in particular. Kenny Chiu, a Conservative member of Parliament in the 43rd Parliament, championed the adoption of a foreign influence registry. Much has been written and revealed about how Kenny Chiu was targeted by the United Front of the CCP because of his advocacy on a foreign influence registry. Although there has been broader adoption and recognition of the importance of that concept, he really was a pioneer on that.

Does the member agree that there were issues of foreign interference targeting Kenny Chiu in the 2021 federal election, and what would he recommend to the government in terms of combatting foreign interference in situations like that?

Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I shared some time on committee, and he will know that I worked quite hard in the 44th Parliament to address the issue of foreign interference. That is why we brought in Bill C-70, which includes the registry and other measures like security of information. Through it, enforcement can take place on issues of foreign interference when it has to do with things like the passage of misinformation on social media or through other channels, such as when Mr. Chiu felt he was targeted. All members in this House have been targets of misinformation and disinformation.

I am happy to continue that hard work on Bill C-70 to make sure that the security of information and shared information and where it is coming from are top of mind.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, this bill obviously introduces some interesting improvements. However, there is a major problem when it comes to the staffing shortage at the Canada Border Services Agency and within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or the RCMP.

In its election platform, the Liberal Party promised to hire 1,000 additional RCMP officers and 1,000 additional Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, officers. The Speech from the Throne mentioned the 1,000 additional RCMP officers. However, neither the Speech from the Throne nor the government have said anything about additional CBSA officers.

The customs union is saying that there is a shortage of 2,000 to 3,000 CBSA officers, so I would like to know what the government plans to do, in relation to this bill, to increase staffing at the CBSA.

[English]

Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, under the previous Harper government the number of CBSA officers was reduced. We have made a commitment to increase the number of CBSA and RCMP officers by 1,000. I think it is an integral part of what will take place beyond the introduction of Bill C-2.

We will make those announcements in the coming days.

• (1750)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to listen to and follow a debate that has been, I think, kind of thoughtful for the most part today. All parties agree that there is some merit to this legislation and that perhaps amendments need to be offered. It needs to be scrutinized and studied.

I know there are constituents in Waterloo who also have a lot of questions. Constituents are concerned with regard to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and wondering if this legislation will protect their rights and freedoms. We do want to take that seriously.

I would like to hear from the member what some of the comments and concerns are that he has been hearing from constituents. Is there value in getting this legislation to committee sooner rather than later, so that perhaps more witnesses and experts can be called and this legislation can be scrutinized to ensure we are getting this piece of the stuff that we need to do right?

Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, the member for Waterloo is one of our hardest-working members. I want to congratulate her on being re-elected for a fourth term in this House.

I have heard this question a lot from constituents. Many of them are happy to hear we are working expeditiously and very quickly on these amendments.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am standing here tonight in the House of Commons, the House of the common people, with great pleasure. It is the first time I will be delivering a substantive speech since re-election.

I would first like to acknowledge my family. My family has been profound in getting me exactly where I am. There is so much work to be done, and without the family support that so many of us in this place have to get us where we are, we would not be here. I thank our families.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the impeccable campaign team and my electoral district association of Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, which went above and beyond every single day. We ran a seamless campaign. It was impressive, and I am so grateful for all of them. I would also like to acknowledge the importance of serving with humility, grace, grit and sometimes an attitude. Respectfully, we have a tremendous responsibility to do what is right for all Canadians, and I give my word to the people of Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga that I will do exactly that.

Government Orders

It is wonderful to rise on behalf of all Canadians. I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, along with a lot of the new faces and the older faces here in this place. I would also like to thank those who are not returning to the House of Commons after a hard-fought election for their dedication to their constituents in the last Parliament. The last Parliament was a historic, unprecedented Parliament, and I am extremely glad that I was able to share a lot of that with them.

To the topic at hand, as I know everyone is anxiously waiting for me to turn the page, Bill C-2 proposes a whole list of changes to various acts of Parliament, and there is a lot to unpack. According to the government-issued backgrounder, it is a catch-all crime bill claiming to stem the flow of fentanyl, cracking down on immigration fraud and fighting organized crime, among other things.

The first immediate red flag that comes up is that this is already asking our underfunded and understaffed security organizations to do more with meagre resources than they already have. In my previous role, I learned a lot about defence and military concepts, and a parallel can be drawn between what we are seeing proposed and an unfortunate constant in our armed forces, an ever-increasing commitment capability gap. We do not have the resources to do the things we need to do. In the Canadian Armed Forces, that manifests itself in a lack of manpower, kit, weapons systems, supports, housing and pay. We may very well need our police organizations to have the authority to do more, but that is completely irrelevant if they are not given the tools to do their current job and what we are asking them to do in addition.

The bill, as it stands, would only increase that gap, which, in turn, would result in more inefficient capabilities across the board as organizations take resources from already struggling sectors to plug into the newly created areas of operation. It may seem as though I am getting technical here, but we really need to dig into this. There are a few parts in the proposed legislation where this is a concern, but there is one in particular that I would like to touch on today, as I have some familiarity, I mean familiarity, with it through my previous work.

I would like to acknowledge that when I was younger, I had a speech impediment, and I have come a long way. I was actually learning sign language when I was younger, in anticipation of not knowing how far my speech would develop, and now I am speaking as capably as I can in English. I am also vigorously learning French, and I am pretty comfortable in Spanish as well, so I have come a long way, but I say to those who have speech impediments or struggle to get up in front of a group, sometimes words from the past or different syllables might catch them, but they just need to keep going. To those who struggle at home, keep going.

Government Orders

● (1755)

Getting back to the legislation, for those listening who may not be familiar with this particular legislation, out of deference to the government, lest I be accused of misleading Canadians as to the content of the bill, I will reference the government's backgrounder, which it produced to ensure that we are getting this particular piece of legislation as clearly as possible so that people can understand it. It reads:

Expand the Canadian Coast Guard's services to include security activities that will strengthen sovereignty and maritime domain awareness, particularly in remote Arctic waters;

This will enable the Canadian Coast Guard to conduct security patrols and collect, analyze and share information and intelligence for security purposes.

How exactly does the government plan to enable the Coast Guard to carry out these increased activities? Where are the additional ships, helicopters and personnel coming from? The legislation is silent on this. We cannot legislate sailors into existence. A bill does not create helicopters. Bill C-2, or any piece of legislation, does not create capability; it creates only verbal commitment, and that is a very serious problem.

This is not the first time that this government's legislation has widened a capability gap. In the last Parliament, the government introduced Bill C-40. The legislation was essentially created to address miscarriages of justice. While we do enjoy a relatively stable justice system, perhaps its single greatest flaw is the staggering slow pace at which it moves. The reason I wanted to speak about Bill C-40 today is the additional burden it put on the judiciary, a burden that has very real consequences.

During the last Parliament, I had the opportunity to speak with Kate, who made it one of her life goals to ensure that women do not have to go through what she did. I am not going to stand before you and repeat all of the terrible details, but, in short, she was the victim of severe intimate partner violence. Her partner tried to kill her. There was a video and photo evidence of her bloodied body as she tried to leave him. He gloated about this abuse to his neighbours. One would think it was an open and shut case. After all, this is Canada, a developed western nation, where justice is king, but after being rescheduled twice, the charges were stayed. She was granted a restraining order and told to be on her way. She had to literally flee the country just to feel safe.

Why did this happen? It happened because the courts could not handle the volume of cases. Hers was among many that were decided to be tossed out, not because of individual innocence but because of bureaucratic burdens. This is a perfect example of that capability gap that I spoke of earlier. The government needs to be able to ensure that our systems, and the people working to keep them going, can function at all times, and the same goes for our borders.

Moving on, I would like to talk about the practical nature of some of these changes that are proposed, changes that I think are more easily committed to than actually achieved. The document reads:

Enhance the ability of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to share information collected under the Act on registered sex offenders with domestic and international partners, including those located in the United States.

● (1800)

The document continues:

Authorize Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to share client information, such as identity, status and immigration documentation with federal, provincial and territorial partners through signed information-sharing agreements;

Make it easier for IRCC to share client information between different IRCC programs (e.g. using permanent residence application data to process citizenship applications);

Allow for regulations to be developed to share client information across federal departments for the purpose of cooperation.

These four proposals are very interesting because, again, they sound great, but exactly how are they to be facilitated? Is a new database being created? Will security clearances need to be harmonized across all departments? How do we know the provinces and territories will agree to these suggestions? Will this necessitate individual processes for each signatory? What if someone moves between provinces? These are all questions that need to be answered and actioned on by an already very slow-moving public service.

I need only point to the Phoenix pay fiasco. Regardless of where blame lies, the government had a very real issue with doing something as basic as paying its employees. The procurement system in the Canadian Armed Forces is piecemeal. Passports were taking months to be issued. ATIPs take months if not years. These are all existing systems that the government has been actively working on to fix, and we are expecting the government to reform IRCC's information-sharing system and incorporate all 13 independent provinces and territories. The Liberals might as well legislate away the national debt, toothaches and bad dreams while they are at it.

The questions keep coming. Bill C-2 proposes to do the following:

Ensure that electronic services providers (ESPs) have the capabilities in place to support law enforcement agencies and CSIS in criminal and intelligence investigations by requiring them to fulfil lawfully authorized requests to access or intercept information and communications.

This is an interesting one. I am not entirely sure how legally requiring an electronic service provider to hand over information to the government when asked means they will have the capability to access, recover and transmit that information to the government, but apparently this legislation would make that happen. It would be quite impressive if it works.

This last point segues into another area of concern: the consultative process. This is an extremely sweeping piece of legislation. We are already hearing concerns about the IRCC reforms from digital security experts and personal rights organizations. I am concerned that the government did not do the due diligence that we normally see in drafting this legislation. I am not sure how much conversation was held with stakeholders, the public or, I suspect, even with its own caucus.

This brings me to another point: Why introduce this legislation so early? The answer lies behind the motive. The legislation was not introduced out of a desire for increased security or a concern with the ongoing fentanyl crisis. No, it was introduced because of one word: tariffs.

Bill C-2 is the government's attempt to assuage the concerns, legitimate or not, of the Trump administration. I would like to be clear: The Trump administration's tariffs are unprompted, unfair and unjust, and I know the House is united in our feelings about this, but the reality remains that they are here. The only way we get rid of them is by sitting down with our American counterparts, listening, and coming to an understanding that these tariffs hurt not just our economy and our people, but those in the United States as well.

● (1805)

Doing that will take much more than speaking out in the House to an audience that is united in their desire to restore and reinforce our trading relationship with our closest trading neighbour; it will take action. It will mean having those very difficult conversations together. This is why I am personally reaching out to industry associations, stakeholders and policy-makers on both sides of the border at the state, provincial and federal levels to open that dialogue. I intend to work collaboratively with the Canadian and American governments in an attempt to come to a mutual understanding and get these unjust tariffs on Canada's businesses and goods removed.

This morning, I had the privilege of meeting with His Excellency Carlos Manuel Joaquín González, Mexico's ambassador to Canada. We had a really good conversation about the importance of building and maintaining the relationships between our two nations.

Not two hours ago, I sat down with American officials, and we had a very productive meeting. In addition, I am in talks with Canadian embassy officials in Washington to facilitate meetings on the ground in D.C., as well as Canadian trade delegates located throughout the U.S.

I recognize the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade has just ended a visit there, and I would like to thank and applaud him for his efforts, but as the government likes to say, this requires a team approach. I will take this opportunity to invite the minister to join me in D.C. so we can have a real collaborative conversation, the government and opposition together, as we tackle these unfair and unjust tariffs with our American counterparts.

It is not always about Liberals and Conservatives. There are times when it needs to be about Canada and the United States, Canadians and Americans. Neither party nor nation can afford to lose sight of that.

Government Orders

Going back to the big picture and bottom line of Bill C-2, in closing, the Conservatives are committed to implementing the tougher and smarter measures that are needed to keep Canada safe. They include securing our borders, strengthening our immigration system and cracking down on terrorist financing. The safety and security of Canadians are non-negotiable.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member went through an election experience, as all of us did, during which the issue she referenced on why we have Bill C-2 in front of us today was hotly discussed. We have a very clear mandate from Canadians, who anticipate that as a collective House of Commons, we pass legislation of this nature.

Does the member feel any sense of obligation to see the legislation pass before the House rises for the summer?

● (1810)

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, knocking on doors and talking to a tremendous number of constituents throughout the campaign was intense, but there are a tremendous number of concerns and fears on the streets and in our neighbourhoods. It does not matter whether people are in rural Ontario or downtown Toronto. The numbers are a direct result of Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, Liberal laws that made it easier for violent offenders to get bail and avoid serious jail time. Bill C-2 fails to completely fix the damage of Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. It moves the needle, but it does not completely fix things.

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague. The bill contains a slight ambiguity regarding the minister's ability to suspend visas or refuse to consider applications. Of course this bill will be studied in committee, but as my colleague surely knows, immigration is an area of shared jurisdiction with Quebec. Denying visas when people have received a Quebec acceptance certificate might be questionable.

I am wondering whether, in committee, the Conservative Party will be willing to respect Quebec's immigration powers and take a closer look at this issue.

[*English*]

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, the bottom line, hard stop, is that regardless of what community, what province or what territory we live in in Canada, parliamentarians on all sides of the House need to be strong voices, advocates and defenders of our democracy. We cannot tiptoe around the rights of criminals, and we really need to protect our victims. We need serious sentences for serious crimes. Victims need to see consequences.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member on coming back here.

Government Orders

During her speech, the member mentioned that the Canadian Coast Guard is going to be tasked with more border security. We know the previous Liberal government dilly-dallied on purchasing and obtaining icebreakers with Arctic capabilities; it has taken years to do that. The Liberals could not even get body armour to staff in Nova Scotia to deal with illegal lobster and elver fisheries out there. It has been reported that they had to recruit enforcement officers all the way from British Columbia to go across the country to Nova Scotia to help with enforcement.

Does the member think the government is even close to being capable of enacting some of the things this bill proposes to do?

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, I could talk for an hour or so on this particular question, but I will not.

Very briefly, let us look back at the last 10 years of the Liberal record. It is 10 years of devastation, 10 years of inaction and 10 years of non-answers. Shall we go on? The bottom line is that since the Liberals took office, there has been a 632% increase in U.S. border patrol encounters with people illegally attempting to enter the United States from Canada, a direct result of the government's failure to enforce effective border security. Canadians are at risk.

• (1815)

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for sharing the story of her speech impediment as a child. I think that shows leadership and she should be congratulated for it.

The member referenced, particularly in maritime waters, helicopters, vessels and, of course, sailors. I wonder if she would agree with me that although maritime waters are incredibly important, the same amount of investment needs to go to our Great Lakes waters, obviously at our borders.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, the bottom line is that Canadians deserve to be safe. Safety is priority number one. Our water access is number one. Many of us are in border communities and have border ridings, me being one of them. Safety is paramount, always.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the question I have for the member is in regard to the willingness of the member to see the legislation ultimately pass. Does she feel, given the very nature of what is happening in the environment around us with President Trump, tariffs and trade, that there is an obligation for us to see this thing at least go to committee?

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Absolutely, Madam Speaker, scrutinizing and rigorously going through legislation is why we are here. As legislators, it is our responsibility to vigorously debate. If we can push the needle forward and find some goodness, that is up for consideration. We, as legislators, always want to do our best to be prudent and go through each piece of legislation with a fine-tooth comb as much as possible where it is permitted.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech, and I would like her to comment on something she did not really say too much about. I think we can all agree that the Liberal government really is managing the entire border, including traffic and border security.

Does my colleague truly believe that border officers' powers can really be increased when we know perfectly well that recruiting and training new officers is a massive challenge, one that is actually almost impossible to meet?

[English]

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, as it stands right now, there are very few consequences for criminals. The bail system is a revolving door. Canadians are living with the consequences of soft-on-crime-type policies.

In my comments, I spoke about Kate, who is one of hundreds of women who have endured terrible crimes. The numbers are raw and real and disturbing. Violent crime is up 50%; sexual assaults are up 74%; gang-related homicides are up 78%, and extortion is up 357% in 10 years of the Liberal government. Policies need to change. Criminals cannot have a free run. It is not okay.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to correct the previous speaker, the member for Richmond East—Steveston. If we look at the public accounts and the Treasury Board's own numbers, they show that in 2016, 2017 and 2018, the Liberal government slashed the amount of full-time equivalents at the CBSA. It was not until 2019 that the numbers actually came back to the Harper-era level.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on how the Liberals, instead of actioning all these issues that are in front of the country right now, just want to stand in the House and gaslight and mislead Canadians.

• (1820)

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, we have to acknowledge that we are in the 45th Parliament. It is a minority Parliament. It is not a majority, and the Liberals are acting like it is. We will hold them to account.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can assure members that the Prime Minister, or any member of the Liberal caucus, recognizes the fact that this is a minority government. We also recognize many of the discussions we had at the door and what was on the minds of Canadians from every region of our nation.

There was consensus on a couple of those issues. One of those issues was something we actually had a vote on earlier today, the ways and means motion recognizing that, on the issue of affordability, we would deliver a tax cut. It was quite encouraging that as we pushed forward on the ways and means motion, when it came time to vote, every member of the House voted in favour of it, all political entities in the House: Greens, New Democrats, Conservatives and, obviously, the Liberals, who were the ones who brought it in.

We received that sort of support because the motion is a reflection of what we heard at the door. Bill C-2 is of a very similar nature. It is on an issue that was being brought up at the door. All of us are aware of the issues.

It is interesting. The very last question was on the Liberals “misleading”, which is just not true. I have been listening throughout the day to members of the Conservative Party speak. Let me give an example of misleading. We had not one but two Conservative members of Parliament stand in their places and try to give Canadians, people who are following the debate, a false impression. The Conservatives were trying to say this legislation would enable people working in the post office to open up whatever letters they want. The impression the Conservatives were trying to give is that it would be as easy as a letter sorter going through the mail and saying, “This one looks interesting; I will open it up.”

An hon. member: That is exactly what it says.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: That is not exactly what it says, as I get heckled. That is what I mean. The Conservatives either do not understand it, or they are unintentionally misleading Canadians. The reality is that if we take the legislation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Edmonton Southeast is rising on a point of order.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Madam Speaker, I want to point out that it is not a lie. The bill would “allow Canada Post—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Nobody said it was a lie. That is not a term that is used in the House of Commons, and that is debate.

I will let the hon. member for Winnipeg—

Frank Caputo: Point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola is rising on a point of order.

Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, during the last Parliament, Speaker Rota drew a distinct line. In fact, I asked a question, and I believe it was Mr. Mendicino, who was Minister Mendicino at the time, who used the term “intentionally misleading”. If one is deliberately trying to obfuscate, is deliberately trying to do something, that is akin to lying. It is unparliamentary language. It has been said by the Chair. It should be repeated again, with all due respect to the Chair.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): What are we talking about? Honestly, I do not understand.

An hon. member: He is calling him a liar.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: I said they don't understand or they are unintentionally believing a lie. It is a choice.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Okay. We are not going to debate. Nobody said anything was a lie, and that was the term that was used when the point of order was raised.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong is rising on the same point of order.

Government Orders

• (1825)

Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I was one of the people to whom the member was alluding who asked a question about what the criteria for Canada Post would be for it to be able to open something. The member said that I was intentionally misleading Canadians, and that is not a fact.

You could consult the Hansard, Madam Speaker, and you would be convinced of that yourself, I am sure.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I will ask the hon. member for Winnipeg North to be more prudent in the expressions he uses to describe what colleagues say or do not say. Let us proceed with his speech for the five minutes he has left.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will have to reread what was actually said. My understanding of what I said was that the members are either completely unaware of what they are saying, or they are unintentionally misleading the House. There is an option. I am not accusing them of intentionally misleading the House. Now—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is exactly what leads to the debate on this issue, the reusing of the same expressions.

The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We have gone through this before in the House. In a previous debate I had with the member opposite, I stated the exact same thing: It is either that the numbers are lying in the public accounts, or the member is purposely misleading the House. I was told by the Chair that I could not say that because it implied the member was lying. He is using the exact same excuse to infer that we are lying. We ask that he withdraw—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is precisely what I just said. We all know that we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly. I would ask the hon. member to be prudent.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will let you be the judge.

We had members on the Conservative benches stand in their place and say that if we allow this legislation to pass, we are allowing Canada Post personnel, like the sorters, to pick through the mail and open it up, which was just not true. What the legislation would do is enable law enforcement officers or agents to go out and get a warrant that would enable them to open an envelope.

An hon. member: That's not true.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, that is true.

Business of Supply

Madam Speaker, that is why I said I really do not think the Conservatives understand it. Today, if I put into a yellow envelope something that might be good or might be bad, and I put it into the mail, the police, even if they can get a warrant, cannot open that envelope unless they wait until it arrives at the destination and then they get the envelope at the destination. That is the law today. Members across the way are challenging me on that fact. They are challenging me on that fact because they believe Canada Post staff would just be able to rifle through all the correspondence, and therefore it is a threat to Canadian liberties. There would be checks in place.

I really want to see the Conservative Party get behind the legislation. It is good legislation. Let us back it up a bit. When we were knocking on doors, people were genuinely concerned about President Trump, the tariffs and trade. The previous speaker commented on why we have the legislation we have today. Yes, there is an expectation that we are going to deal with our borders and give strength to our border control officers. It is in response, at least in part, to what we have been witnessing over the last eight weeks.

Much like today, when we unanimously supported the ways and means motion, I suggest we should be looking, at the very least, at seeing this legislation go to committee stage so that all members can get a better understanding of it. If there are ways we can improve the bill, by all means make suggestions at the standing committee. We have an opportunity to deliver to Canadians what Canadians wanted us to do just weeks ago when we were knocking on doors. This is an issue that does need to be dealt with, and that is why it is Bill C-2—

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I am going to interrupt the hon. member, who will have 15 minutes and 20 seconds to complete his speech the next time this bill returns to the House.

Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27, the House will now resolve itself into a committee of the whole to study all votes in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

[Translation]

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

* * *

• (1835)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2025-26

(Consideration in committee of the whole of all votes in the main estimates, Alexandra Mendès in the chair)

The Deputy Chair: I would like to open this session of committee of the whole by making a short statement on the evening's proceedings.

Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27, the committee of the whole convenes today for the sole purpose of asking questions of the government in regard to the estimates. The first round will

begin with the official opposition, followed by the government and then the Bloc Québécois. After that, we will follow the usual proportional rotation.

Each member will be allocated 15 minutes, which may be used both for debate and for posing questions. Should members wish to use this time to make a speech, it can last a maximum of 10 minutes, leaving at least five minutes for questions to the minister or the parliamentary secretary acting on behalf of the minister. When a member is recognized, he or she should indicate to the Chair how the 15-minute period will be used. In other words, what portion will be used for speeches and what portion for questions and answers. Furthermore, members who wish to split their time with one or more other members shall indicate it to the Chair.

[Translation]

When the time is to be used for questions and comments, the Chair will expect that the minister's or parliamentary secretary's response will reflect approximately the time taken to ask the question, since this time will count toward the time allotted to the member. As is the case in any proceeding in committee of the whole, members need not be in their own seats to be recognized. Although members may speak more than once, the Chair will generally try to ensure that all members wishing to speak are heard before inviting members to speak again, while respecting the proportional party rotations for speakers.

[English]

I also wish to indicate that, in committee of the whole, ministers and members should be referred to by their title or riding name and, of course, all remarks should be addressed through the Chair. I ask for everyone's co-operation in upholding all established standards of decorum, parliamentary language and behaviour.

At the conclusion of tonight's debate, the House will adjourn immediately until tomorrow. In addition, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

[Translation]

We may now begin tonight's session.

[English]

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Madam Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix and the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga.

Is the minister okay with the fact that Paul Bernardo, one of Canada's worst serial killers, remains in medium security?

Business of Supply

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Chair, Correctional Service Canada makes those determinations.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, that is not what I asked. I asked if the minister is okay with the fact that Bernardo is in medium security, yes or no.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, this is not my decision or that of the Minister of Public Safety. These decisions are made by Correctional Service Canada and are not subject in any way to my intervention.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, the minister can order an inquiry, as was done by former minister Goodale. Will he do that, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I have already addressed this issue. The Correctional Service of Canada contributes to the safety of our institutions and communities by ensuring that all inmates are placed in institutions that match their security level. Inmates are classified based on the necessary degree of supervision.

Rhonda Kirkland: Madam Chair, on a point of order, I believe the answers have to be the same amount of time as the question posed. He was given—

The Deputy Chair: Approximately, yes they do, but it is not necessarily to the second.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, the minister did not actually answer the question. Yes or no, will he order an inquiry?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I indicated that Correctional Service of Canada contributes to the safety of the institutions, and they make these determinations.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, he will not order an inquiry.

How about Terri-Lynne McClintic, who killed an eight-year-old child? She is now living in medium security next to a child through the mother-child program. Is he okay with that, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, Correctional Service Canada makes these determinations based on the security risk level that it assesses. It is an independent decision that is outside of the scope.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, the minister can have policy on this. A sex offender that killed an eight-year-old child is living next to children in jail. Is he okay with it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I have addressed this issue a number of times. This is subject to the Correctional Service Canada's—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, that is a slap in the face to Rodney Stafford, the father of Tori Stafford, who has to live with this. Will the minister say that to his face, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, this matter has been addressed. This is in the purview of Correctional Service Canada, and it is up to it to make that determination.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, he does not want to meet with the father of a victim. That is reprehensible.

What about Tara Desousa, Canada's youngest dangerous offender, who sexually assaulted a baby and lives at the same jail as the mother-child program. Is the minister going to give us the same answer again, that it is up to someone else, when he is the minister?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I have been the minister for three weeks. Based on my understanding of my portfolio, this matter falls under the purview of Correctional Service Canada, and it is up to it to make these determinations, not the minister.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, does this minister have any control over what happens in his jails?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, once again, Correctional Service Canada makes that determination. It is an independent body. It is up to Correctional Service Canada to make the decision, and this is the way it should be.

● (1840)

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, I invite Canadians to behold our Public Safety Minister, who has no idea what is going on and is seemingly indifferent.

Now let us get to bail. The minister said that the bail system was sound. Does he stand by that?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I realize that we are playing to TikTok and other social media.

Our bail system is something that we committed to strengthen, and we will do that.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for—

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, in his words, not TikTok's words, does he believe that the bail system is sound, yes or no?

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member will wait until I call on him by his constituency name.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we have a sound criminal justice system. It does require strengthening, and we look forward to doing the work in this mandate.

Frank Caputo: Madam Chair, yesterday, seven people were involved as fentanyl kingpins. They were on bail at the time of the alleged offences. Does that sound like a sound system?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, once again, this is something that is before the courts, and I will not be commenting on it.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Chair, throughout my election campaign, I had the privilege of meeting people from all over Montmorency—Charlevoix who talked to me about the legislation stemming from Bill C-21. Farmers, hunters, sport shooters and even athletes told me how worried they were.

Can the minister tell us whether he agrees that the legislation stemming from Bill C-21 is unfair?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, in terms of legislation that has gone through the House, it was the will of Parliament, where those decisions have been made. Anything outside of that is not within my scope.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, that means that, at some point, honest farmers who own firearms, store them legally and register them will no longer be able to use those firearms to defend their own homes and their livestock. Is that it?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we have a fairly robust set of guidelines for restricting guns, and Bill C-21 addresses many of the concerns that I have heard from my constituents.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, the Montmorency—Charlevoix region is rich in sport shooting, and hunting and fishing. This generates strong economic spinoffs, with more than 68,000 people employed in this industry.

Does the legislation resulting from Bill C-21 seek to impose limits on law-abiding sport hunters who train to properly use their weapons and practise their sport, even to hunt their own food?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, no.

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, many military personnel continue to train as they were trained in the army to use firearms safely and effectively and to go to shooting ranges. I have three ranges in my riding.

Has the minister ever visited a shooting range in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, no.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, without knowing how shooting ranges work, the Liberals are prepared to take action and take this option away from sport shooters who use firearms legally, in a structured and effective manner.

Will the legislation resulting from Bill C-21 affect these people?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, Bill C-21 was brought in to protect the safety and security of Canadians. There are legal gun owners. There are hunters who legitimately hunt. It should not be impacting those individuals.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, in my riding, many biathletes use firearms to practise their sport.

Will the legislation resulting from Bill C-21 restrict them from using their guns to practise their sport?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, it should not.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, the biathletes who use their guns will not be affected, but farmers who need their guns to protect their livestock could be affected.

Is that fair?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, no, unless they are using semi-automatic weapons.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, I will quote the National Police Federation, which said that Bill C-21 diverts extremely important personnel, resources, and funding away from addressing the more immediate and growing threat of criminal use of firearms.

Does the minister agree with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's statement?

● (1845)

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I do not. Yesterday, I met with the the chief of police for Toronto, who indicated that guns are a real problem and need to be off the streets. That is one of the reasons why we—

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

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, how much is the firearms buy-back program going to cost taxpayers?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, no.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, does he not know how much it is going to cost? It was estimated at \$647 million. That is the Liberal number, but Canada has 2.3 million firearms owners, who own five firearms on average. If we do the simple math and buy back just one for around \$800 to \$1,000, we are talking about several billion dollars.

Does the minister think that investing several billion dollars could do more to help the police than hurt farmers and hunters?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, the government is willing to invest in order to get guns off our streets, guns that legitimately should not be in the hands of individuals. Of course, there are legitimate hunters and farmers and others who have guns. The number he cited is patently false. There is a certain number of weapons that we want to get off—

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

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Chair, the second-most common type of murder in Canada involves death by stabbing.

Does the minister intend to start buying back kitchen knives and preventing people from taking karate lessons?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I am not sure if humour is the right form for this very serious conversation.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Madam Chair, the new border bill does not include combatting violence against women and intimate partner violence. Is that deliberate?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Chair, there are many elements to the border bill, including ensuring that those who are convicted under this have information disclosed when they travel. There are many other elements I will be—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, is intimate partner violence a priority for the government?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, intimate partner violence is absolutely important for the government. It is something that the Prime Minister confirmed, and it is something that we as a government will address.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, Bill C-2 does not grant human traffickers running across the border the possibility of bail. Is this true or false?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, this is not a bail bill. It is a border bill. I would be more than glad to go through the bill with the member opposite.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, does it grant kidnappers the possibility of bail? Is this true or false?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, it is perhaps important that members opposite read the bill before asking questions. This is not a—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, does the minister know how many sexual assaults were reported in 2021?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, not exactly, but it is something that is of serious concern to all Canadians.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, he does not know the number.

Business of Supply

Does the minister know how many victims of intimate partner violence there were in 2022?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I have met with many of those who have been impacted by intimate partner violence. In my previous role as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Justice, I met with many, many organizations and women who—

Larry Brock: Madam Chair, on a point of order, I am seeing a pattern here of the minister deliberately giving a response that is substantially longer than the length of time it took to ask the question.

The Deputy Chair: Yes, I did cut the minister off more than once.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, does Bill C-2 itself include any additional funding for police services, maritime patrol, IRCC, CBSA or Public Safety, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we are investing \$1.3 billion to the border. We are committing to 1,000 new RCMP and 1,000 new—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, were any victim rights organizations consulted during the drafting process of Bill C-2?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we have done consultations on many elements of the bill. We look forward to robust discussions.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, does Bill C-2 include the Prime Minister's promised bail reform?

● (1850)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, once again I will repeat that this is not a bail bill; this is a borders bill.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, on numbers again, does the minister know how many sexual assaults were reported? Is it 30,000, 100,000? Does he have a ballpark idea?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, no, I do not. I do know it is a significant issue that impacts women across this country.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, these are human lives. Does Bill C-2 repeal previous Liberal legislation that grants predators the possibility of bail, yes or no?

Business of Supply

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, this is not a bail reform bill. This is a bill on borders.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, were any women's rights organizations consulted during the drafting of Bill C-2?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we had consultation on many elements of the bill. As the member can appreciate, I have been a minister in this portfolio for three weeks.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, is it yes or no to consultation with women's groups?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I look forward to those consultations.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, has Bill C-2 been costed?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, this is something Canadians asked for in the election.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, yes or no, has it been costed?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, the bill has been presented. We look forward to a robust discussion on the bill.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, were any indigenous groups consulted in the drafting of Bill C-2?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we consulted on many elements of this bill over the last year or so, but we look forward to a robust discussion.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, were any police or chiefs organizations consulted during the drafting process of Bill C-2?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, a number of police organizations were consulted, such as the RCMP, as well as our intelligence—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Chair, were any victim rights organizations consulted, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, many organizations were consulted as part of different—

The Deputy Chair: We are done.

The hon. Minister of Transport has the floor.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Madam Chair, hon. colleagues, before I begin, as a transport minister and a former minister of foreign affairs, I think it is appropriate to pay tribute to a great Canadian, our friend Marc Garneau. He was a colleague, he was a friend, and he was a true national hero.

I met Marc when I joined the small but mighty Liberal caucus in 2013. He was already a national legend: an astronaut, a distinguished public servant as president of the Canadian Space Agency, and a committed Liberal who stepped up to run for our party in 2008 when we were on the opposition side of the House.

It was with great pride and respect that all of us watched Marc take on the roles of minister of transport and minister of foreign affairs. He led these portfolios with the grace, dignity and discipline that had defined his historic role as the first Canadian in space. Be-

yond these titles and accomplishments, Marc was simply a wonderful human being. He loved his wife, Pam, and his children with devotion and delight. Those of us lucky enough to know him personally will remember his kindness, his wisdom and yes, his charming cooking videos. I offer my very sincere condolences to Pam and to the entire Garneau family.

I will be accompanied today by Arun Thangaraj, the deputy minister of transport, and later on by Chris Fox, the deputy clerk and deputy minister for intergovernmental affairs and internal trade.

[Translation]

At a time when Canada is facing growing uncertainty abroad, a rise in global protectionism, a shift in trade alliances and the unjustified and illegal imposition of tariffs on our products, it is more important than ever before to strengthen our transportation system, economy and internal trade.

[English]

This means reducing internal trade barriers and building Canada. It means making it easier and faster to move goods and people across the country and exports to our partners around the world. This is how we will build the strongest economy in the G7. This is why I am so honoured to serve as both Minister of Internal Trade and Minister of Transport.

We all know Canada is in a critical moment. U.S. tariffs are battering our country and threatening to push the world economy into a recession, hard-working Canadians are losing their jobs, businesses are losing their customers and investors are holding back. This is why it is so essential for us to press ahead with a project that costs nothing and can be accomplished at the stroke of a pen, delivering truly free trade in Canada.

Economists estimate that truly free trade within our country, making it as easy to do business between, say, British Columbia and Nova Scotia as it is within one province itself, would add as much as \$200 billion to our economy. At this time of crisis, that is a boost we definitely need. Free trade in our own country makes sense. Now that the LCBO is not stocking American wine, it makes more sense than ever to be sure that Nova Scotia and B.C. wines can be found on its shelves.

A registered nurse qualified in Saskatchewan should be able to get right to work if her family moves to Newfoundland to be close to aging relatives; a plumbing firm in Winnipeg should be able to expand to do jobs in Kenora as easily as it can in Brandon, and a trucker should be able to drive from Halifax harbour to the port of Vancouver without buying permits to cross between provinces and wasting precious time making technical adjustments after he rolls across each provincial line.

● (1855)

[Translation]

Essentially, the decision to build a single Canadian economy out of 13 is a decision to trust one other. It means deciding that the delicious steak being eaten in Calgary is surely good enough to serve in Charlottetown and that the dental hygienist loved by all her patients in Moncton can be trusted to do the same excellent job when she moves to Montreal.

Australia, a country with which we have so much in common, made the decision to build a single continental economy 30 years ago. Australians decided to trust each other and, over the last three decades, that has enriched each Australian and reinforced the ties uniting that beautiful country.

[English]

Now is the time for Canada to do likewise.

The wave of patriotism that has swept across our great country over the past few months has really been inspiring and invigorating. Let us seize the moment to turn that love of Canada into action by trusting each other and creating one single Canadian economy from coast to coast to coast. What a delicious irony it will be for us to respond to tariffs imposed on us from abroad by finally tearing down the tariff and trade barriers we have imposed on each other. Let us get this done once and for all.

[Translation]

That is why we will introduce legislation to eliminate domestic trade barriers and build a unified Canadian economy. For far too long, senseless barriers have curbed trade. It is time to mutually recognize provincial and territorial regulations to facilitate trade by Canadian companies throughout the country and allow skilled workers to seize opportunities, wherever they may be. Experts estimate that eliminating barriers could add up to \$200 billion to our national GDP. It is an incredible opportunity to build our country.

[English]

Momentum is growing across the country. Nova Scotia and Manitoba have already passed legislation to remove barriers to internal trade. B.C. introduced the economic stabilization act, and several other provinces, including Ontario, P.E.I., New Brunswick and Quebec, are advancing their own legislation.

Memoranda of understanding between Ontario and other provinces, including Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P.E.I., Manitoba and Saskatchewan, as well as powerful regional agreements like the pioneering New West Partnership Trade Agreement, signal new levels of co-operation between provinces and a commitment to bring down barriers to internal trade.

Business of Supply

I really do want to salute the premiers of the provinces and territories for their work on this. Their action shows what we can accomplish when we work together as one Canadian economy.

[Translation]

At the national level, through the committee on internal trade, we are accelerating efforts to eliminate remaining exceptions to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, advance mutual recognition in sectors such as trucking and consumer goods, and facilitate housing construction by addressing interprovincial material and labour barriers. Progress is also being made on credential recognition and direct-to-consumer alcohol sales.

● (1900)

[English]

Let us choose to trust each other. If a truck can travel from Windsor to Cambridge, it should be able to travel from Winnipeg to Kenora. If a steak is certified in Alberta, we should be confident it is also safe to eat in Saskatchewan. If someone earns a professional credential in Quebec, they should be able to work anywhere in the country. It is time to remove these barriers.

[Translation]

I encourage all members of the House to support this work to strengthen transportation and trade infrastructure and deliver on the promise of a truly unified economy. To unlock our full economic potential, we must not only remove barriers but also build. That is why we also want to move forward with national infrastructure projects.

[English]

These projects are investments in Canada. They strengthen our economy and create good jobs. They become symbols of national pride and of our country itself. From our railways to our waterways to our airports, investing in these projects shapes who we are as a people and as a country. I see I am running out of time, so let me just say the following.

[Translation]

All of these measures are aimed at making life more affordable, growing our economy and giving Canadians more freedom to live and work where opportunities present themselves.

[English]

These are not partisan goals. These are nation-building priorities that benefit every region, every business and every Canadian. Let us get this work done, together.

Business of Supply

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Chair, I appreciate the comments, especially the opening remarks from my colleague and friend regarding Marc Garneau. I too would just like to express my personal condolences to his family and friends, and to recognize the many lives that he touched, including mine, in a very meaningful way.

Having said that, when I reflect on the last federal election and the many doors that not only I but also members of Parliament from across this country knocked on, there is absolutely no doubt that the people of Canada are genuinely concerned about Donald Trump, the whole issue of tariffs and the issue of trade.

I think it bodes well for us to have the Minister of Transport taking on such an important file, in terms of trying to bring Canada together, given her background, especially dealing with trade agreements with Europe, the United States and so forth, and how she understands the importance of building the one economy here in Canada. I wonder whether the minister could provide further thoughts on just how important the potential \$200 billion is to Canadians as a whole, in every region of our country.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Chair, of course the member for Winnipeg North, too, was a member of the small but mighty Liberal caucus that I joined in 2013, and he was a true friend of Marc Garneau's, so I am grateful to him for joining me in the tribute.

The member is right that at a time when we are being faced by punitive, illegal and unjustified tariffs from abroad, one of the best things we can do to help ourselves is eliminate the barriers we have imposed on ourselves. A study done for the IMF estimates that internal barriers to trade in Canada amount to a 7% tariff that we put on each other. One of the things that fills me with so much hope is that Canadians get it. This has been an issue that for many years economists and policy wonks have understood. Changing it and getting rid of the barriers would help our whole country.

It is not a partisan issue. Jason Kenney, a former member of the House and a former premier of Alberta, has been a long-time, vocal and effective champion of internal trade in Canada, so I really do hope that, while we will disagree about many things in the House, one issue that all members of the House will be able to agree on is that by trading with each other, by trusting each other, we can make Canada stronger.

Conservative premiers support it, like Premier Ford and Premier Houston. NDP premiers support it, like Premier Kinew and Premier Eby. Liberal premiers support it, like Premier Holt. Therefore, I really hope that this will be an issue that not only unites Canadians and the Canadian economy but also, and I have a fragile hope here, maybe even unites the members of the House.

● (1905)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, I was encouraged, and I am sure the minister was too, this morning. We had a high sense of working together when every member of the House of Commons voted in favour of the ways and means motion. The minister talked about unifying Canadians and the chamber. One of the things that we could also do is get behind Bill C-2 and the initiative of building a stronger Canada.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Chair, I absolutely agree with my colleague, and I do want to point out to the members opposite that for all of us, our job is to be partisan, but that there are times when we can work together. One of the things I was very proud of was that when Canada finally concluded CETA, our trade deal with Europe, I was able, in the House, to thank the wonderful Ed Fast, and we were able, together, to celebrate an agreement that was initiated by a Conservative government and concluded by a Liberal government to the benefit of all Canadians, and it is more valuable today than ever. Therefore, perhaps we will be able to look at free trade in Canada and the "one Canadian economy" effort in a similar non-partisan way.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Chair, according to the Customs and Immigration Union, the Canada Border Services Agency needs an additional 2,000 to 3,000 border officers to carry out its duties. The Canada Border Services Agency training centre can only train 600 officers per year, which is in line with current attrition rates. During the most recent election, the Liberal Party talked about hiring 1,000 additional CBSA officers. However, I was surprised to see that this promise does not appear in the throne speech.

Does the government intend to hire 1,000 additional border services officers?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Chair, day in and day out, approximately 8,600 Canada Border Services Agency frontline personnel play a crucial role protecting communities. We committed in the campaign, which I have reiterated a number of times, to hiring 1,000 new CBSA officers. I had a chance to meet some of them, and they do a phenomenal job in protecting our borders.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, the government intends to hire 1,000 additional officers, but only 600 border services officers can be trained each year because of a lack of training centres.

Does the government intend to create another training centre for border services officers?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, the number of border service officer graduates from the Canada Border Services Agency has continuously increased over the years since 2016, with the exception of 2020 due to COVID. We look forward to hiring and training the 1,000 CBSA officers over the next couple of years.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, I will ask the minister to be more specific.

Given that some officers are retiring, does the minister believe that training 600 officers per year will be enough to meet current and future requirements following the passage of Bill C-2?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, whether it is with respect to people retiring or people going into other careers, we often do replenish them within the CBSA. A thousand additional officers will be hired and trained. I do not have a specific plan right now, but I look forward to presenting that to the member.

● (1910)

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, to improve border security, the Customs and Immigration Union has proposed that officers be allowed to patrol outside their border crossings to intercept migrants who may be crossing the border illegally. We support this proposal to establish co-operation between the RCMP and border services officers.

Does the minister support the idea of giving patrol officers the authority to monitor the borders? This could be done through regulations and not necessarily through legislation.

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I had a chance to meet with the CBSA union. I had a really good conversation with its members. There are about 10,000 frontline officers who currently secure our border, including the RCMP and the CBSA. Our commitment is to add 1,000 RCMP and 1,000 CBSA officers so that our border could be strengthened with those resources.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, the government promised to hire 1,000 new RCMP officers.

Can the minister tell us when those officers will be hired and when they will begin their duties?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, that will be an ongoing process. The RCMP officers will be hired, trained and able to support the protection of our border.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, does the minister have a chart to keep track of the hiring process and the start dates of these new RCMP officers? We know that recruitment is challenging and that training takes time.

I would like him to explain to me how he intends to go about hiring 1,000 RCMP officers in a short period of time.

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we have committed to hiring, training and deploying 1,000 new RCMP officers. The plan has not been fully fleshed out yet. I look forward to sharing that plan, once it is available, with my colleague opposite.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, I am concerned about illegal border crossings in both directions because I represent a border region. Some farmers have even paid out of their own pockets, using their own money, to install barriers, to place rocks or vehicles, to prevent vehicles from illegally crossing their farmland.

Will the government invest funds to install more physical barriers to prevent smugglers from using private land?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we are investing \$1.3 billion to strengthen our border. That includes armed personnel who will be deployed. We also are now using Black Hawk helicopters. There are three of them deployed across Canada. I have had a chance to visit the border in a Black Hawk helicopter to see the impact they are having on border crossings.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, people in my riding are very aware of the presence of helicopters.

We are talking about farmers. We are talking about people whose land is being used by smugglers' vehicles and illegal migrants. People feel as though they have to set up barriers themselves.

Does the minister intend to support people who are constantly grappling with this phenomenon and help them cover the cost of installing barriers?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, the best way to support Canadians is deterrence. One of the things Bill C-2 incorporates is deterrence of those who may be crossing through irregular ports of entry. We believe that other measures contained in the bill would support deterrence of those who are crossing the border irregularly.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, this week, we learned through media reports that the RCMP was recruiting in English only outside Quebec. We were very disheartened to learn that.

I know the minister is committed to improving his French. Does he intend to bring the RCMP into line and demand that it remedy this situation?

Business of Supply

• (1915)

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I completely agree with my colleague opposite. The recruitment of officers solely in English is unacceptable. We are a bilingual country, and the RCMP is a bilingual organization. We believe in official bilingualism, and we will ensure that the RCMP improves its methods and ensures that there are bilingual processes for recruitment.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, I would now like to talk about the issue of gender transitions for prisoners and inmates who have assaulted women.

There was a deplorable case in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. A pedophile was released and was now identifying as a woman with a different first name, but the information was not shared with the victim he had raped. According to Radio-Canada reports, the victim's family only learned of the attacker's new name and gender identity when they happened to bump into the person. Correctional Service Canada responded that the law prevents it from disclosing information to victims about a sex offender's gender transition.

Does the minister agree with Correctional Service Canada's statement, and will he make the necessary changes to the law?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, Correctional Service Canada works to ensure that all offenders, including gender-diverse offenders, are in an environment that contributes to their safety, safe rehabilitation and reintegration. CSC may place or transfer a gender-diverse offender to an institution that better aligns with their gender unless there are overriding health or safety concerns that cannot be resolved.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, regarding foreign interference, several measures in Bill C-70 were adopted during the last Parliament, but the regulations still have not been implemented.

When are you going to adopt these measures?

The Deputy Chair: I would like to remind the hon. member that I am not going to do anything, but that the hon. minister will have a chance to do something.

The hon. minister.

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I look forward to bringing forward regulations as well as other measures to implement Bill C-70.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, the minister is probably as concerned as I am about the situation of indigenous border communities. In my riding, that means Akwesasne. These communities are victims of geography and are being exploited by criminal groups from the big cities. For example, we know that guns are passing through indigenous reserves, but first nations police services are short on resources.

Will the government give more support to indigenous police services? What is it going to do?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I was in Akwesasne about two weeks ago, and I met with the grand chief and many other chiefs. I had the opportunity to understand the complex nature of that border.

I look forward to working with not just Akwesasne but other first nations and indigenous communities to strengthen their borders.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, I would like to ask the minister a question about gun control. We know there are a few months left in the amnesty period for guns that were banned on May 1, 2020.

When will phase two of the buyback program be rolled out?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we have already implemented the first part, which is obtaining firearms from businesses. I think around 12,000 firearms have been recovered. We look forward to launching the next phase of this in short order.

We are in the process of looking at options, but I can assure the member that we will be moving forward with the second part of this.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, could the minister be more specific and tell us what he means by “in short order”? How long will it take? Will it be in a month, two months or a year? Can he clarify what he means by “in short order”?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we are targeting the fall.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, we have often seen that the government does not really know who is leaving Canada. For example, following a study by CIBC economists in 2023, the government discovered that Canada was undercounting its population by one million. Unlike some other countries, Canada has no exit immigration controls, such as biometric data checks on foreign nationals. As a result, the government is losing track of the temporary immigrants on its territory.

Bill C-2 contains a provision about reporting the departure of sex offenders from Canada. However, without tighter controls, this measure could be ineffective, since the government often has no idea who is leaving the country. It must rely solely on airlines and information shared by foreign countries.

How does the minister plan to fix this situation?

● (1920)

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, of course, Bill C-2 is one aspect of the way we are going to fix this. If members look at the provisions relating to the sharing of information within the IR-CC and among different agencies of the federal government and provincial government, it is one way to track the number of people who are here or who have left. Of course, the role of the CBSA is also to enforce removals that are put in front of it, and we look forward to ensuring that expedited removals take place.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Chair, I would like the minister to clarify his thoughts on exit controls for foreign nationals.

It is not right that there are foreign nationals in this country but we do not know where. We also do not know when they leave the country. What I really want the minister to clarify is what he is going to do to improve the situation.

Is he satisfied with the current measures? Is he not aware that he needs to implement new controls for foreign nationals to properly screen people leaving Canada? I would like him to tell me very specifically how he is going to address this gap.

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, we will be working closely with U.S. border patrol to manage both sides of the border and track those who leave Canada.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Chair, I wish you and the hon. committee members a good evening. I want to thank everyone for this invitation.

It is my privilege to appear before everyone as Canada's new Minister of Public Safety. Let me thank the officials who are here today. Let me also express my deepest condolences to the late Marc Garneau. His was one of the first names I learned when I came to Canada. He is a national hero. He impacted so many people and so many generations of Canadians. He served this House and Canadians with such grace and such incredible strength and integrity. I want to thank his family for sharing him with Canada.

I am humbled and honoured by the Prime Minister's appointment. I recognize it is a role that comes with great responsibility. I am to undertake my duties to serve Canadians with the utmost dedication and commitment. Protecting the public is one of the government's foremost duties, and it is an obligation shared by all parliamentarians. As I serve in this role, I also commit to working with all members of this committee, and indeed all parliamentarians, as we aim to fulfill this fundamental obligation.

These main estimates will ensure we can deliver on our collective duty to Canadians. To fulfill our obligation, we must first ensure that we can continue to support all of Public Safety's dedicated personnel, those who work hard each and every day to keep Canadians safe from harm.

As a reflection of its importance to our country's security, the Public Safety portfolio is the largest non-military portfolio in the

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government. Altogether, the Public Safety portfolio includes over 60,000 personnel. Every day, each of these individuals is dedicated to keeping Canadians safe and secure while they safeguard our rights and freedoms.

One of the first things I did after being appointed Canada's Minister of Public Safety was meet with some of those 60,000 personnel. I went to Cornwall to meet with the CBSA and RCMP officers securing the border and protecting our country. I look forward to meeting with many public safety personnel over the coming months to thank them for their dedication to their communities and their country, and for all they do to keep Canadians safe. However, it is not enough just to thank them for their work. We must give them the tools and resources they need to do their jobs effectively.

On a portfolio-wide basis, the total authorities sought in the main estimates for the fiscal year will result in funding approvals of \$16.2 billion for the Public Safety portfolio. That will result in a net increase of \$3.1 billion, or 23.7%, over the previous year's estimates. For Public Safety Canada, the total funding sought is \$2.16 billion, which is an increase of \$557.7 million, or 34.7%, over the previous year. For the Canada Border Services Agency, the total funding sought is \$2.99 billion, an increase of \$343.4 million, or 13%, over the previous year. For the Correctional Service of Canada, the total funding sought is \$3.86 billion, an increase of \$691.3 million, or 21.8%, over the previous year. For the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the total funding sought is \$980.1 million, an increase of \$277.5 million, or 39.5%, over the previous year. Finally, for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the total funding sought is \$6.08 billion, an increase of \$1.23 billion, or 25.3%.

As part of these estimates, \$128.7 million has been designated to the CBSA and the RCMP to further enhance the integrity of Canada's border. As hon. members are aware, earlier this week we introduced Bill C-2, the strong borders act. I want to thank members who have already lent their voices to debating this bill. The strong borders act would ensure that in addition to the increased financial support we are providing to the agencies tasked with keeping us safe, we will be, to quote the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, "modernizing legislation and equipping law enforcement with necessary tools to combat transnational organized crime in an increasingly complex threat environment."

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● (1925)

We need to make it harder for organized crime to move money, drugs, people and firearms that endanger our communities. We need to ensure Canada's law enforcement is equipped with the tools needed to stay ahead of organized crime and is empowered to crack down on illicit activities. This is essential to maintaining the safety and security of our country.

Bill C-2, the strong borders act, would help us achieve just that. The bill would keep Canadians safe by ensuring law enforcement has the right tools to keep our borders secure, to combat transnational organized crime, to stop the flow of illegal fentanyl and to crack down on money laundering. We will also train 1,000 new CBSA officers and 1,000 more RCMP personnel.

Finally, further action will be taken over the coming months to keep our communities even safer, to get guns off our streets and to make bail harder to get for repeat offenders charged with car thefts, home invasions, human trafficking and drug smuggling.

As the Minister of Public Safety, my top priority will always be to ensure that each and every Canadian is safe and secure in our country. As I have already mentioned, it is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. Public safety is an issue that I have been seized with for a number of years in my riding and community, and as the Minister of Public Safety, I take great pride in this position of leadership, which has a direct impact on the safety of all Canadians and their communities.

Once again, I am thankful for this invitation today. I look forward to questions.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Chair, I appreciate the comments from the minister. I want to pick up on how important it is that we advance Bill C-2.

Border control-related issues were raised extensively during the election, and when I reflect on the election, I believe this bill is something Canadians want to see. I would highlight that the Canadian Police Association, and the minister can correct me if I am wrong, is supporting Bill C-2. Bill C-2 would, in fact, give much more strength to protecting Canada's borders.

I am wondering if the minister could reflect on it being the second bill, which clearly demonstrates its priority. Can he provide his thoughts on that?

● (1930)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, as we were ready to table the bill, I was hoping it would be Bill C-1, but I was told that that had to be for the Speech from the Throne.

With great respect, Bill C-2 is the first formal bill this 45th Parliament is debating, and we are debating it for a very good reason. It is to ensure that the safety and security of our borders are strengthened, that Canadians feel safe at home and that guns, fentanyl and illicit drugs and money do not come over our border.

It is a very important step, but it is only a step. There is a lot more to do, including bail reform, which I look forward to coming back to the House for under the leadership of our Minister of Justice. As my friend heard and many in this House and I have heard,

securing the border is a top priority for the Prime Minister and for this government.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, one thing that Canadians were able to witness was a first ministers' conference in Saskatchewan, where the premiers and the Prime Minister came together to deal with the issue of President Trump, the tariffs and trade. No doubt there would have been some discussions in regard to the border issue.

What was really amazing to witness was the high sense of co-operation. I made reference in a previous question to the co-operation on the ways and means motion, which we all voted for, collectively. I wonder if the minister could provide his thoughts in regard to how we can capture the Canadian consensus, the build Canada strong consensus out there, and incorporate this legislation as a part of that Canadian consensus.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, let me just say at the outset that the issue of public safety, strengthening our border and the security of Canadians is something that all parliamentarians share. It is not exclusive to the government or the opposition.

This is a moment where we have to work in collaboration and conjunction to strengthen our borders. Something that I think Canadians have asked us to do is work together and put partisanship aside. As many of my colleagues know, I often work across party lines, and I really do look forward to strengthening the bill before the House at the appropriate time. Canadians' vote on April 28 signalled that they want full collaboration and co-operation, not just among premiers and the Prime Minister, but also in this House.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, I know that a good number of members, especially from the Brampton Liberal caucus, raised the issue of auto theft. The member will recall that we actually had a summit dealing with auto theft, bringing the different stakeholders together. I think people would be encouraged to hear that within Bill C-2, there is a really good attempt to take yet another step in dealing with that particular issue.

Could the minister provide some thoughts on the auto theft component?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I just want to say, in terms of auto theft, that there is a key component of the legislation that would enable the CBSA to have access at ports of exit to do inspections. Currently, the legislation exists for inspections to be undertaken when goods leave Canada. However, there is no compulsion of organizations such as ports and airports, or other ports of exit, to do the inspection. This legislation would in fact compel them to do so, and we believe it is a very important step to curtail auto theft.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, this is a substantial piece of legislation that would have a profoundly positive impact on improving border security. The minister has made reference to the hiring of 1,000 RCMP and CBSA officers, 2,000 in total, and that is going to actually give more teeth to the legislation itself.

Could the minister provide his thoughts in regard to why getting those additional resources was so critically important?

• (1935)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, back in December we committed to \$1.3 billion in new investments to secure the border. Part of that is the hiring of 1,000 new RCMP and CBSA officers. There are currently 10,000 frontline officers who protect our border, and our intention is to strengthen that not just with personnel, but also with modern technology, including drones and including Black Hawk helicopters. We have three of them that are secured across Canada. There is the training and the personnel required to manage a 9,000-kilometre border. It is one of the largest borders in the world, and it is something that has often not been defended, but we are in a moment in history when we need to strengthen the resources. That is exactly what we are doing.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, finally I would ask, in regard to the first question with respect to the Canadian Police Association, if the minister can just give a sense of the type of support there is from outside the House, obviously from Canadians, but also from so many others who are behind the bill. Why is it so important we pass it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Chair, I did highlight some of this in my earlier speech.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police is in support, as are the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and Leah West in *The Globe and Mail*, someone who writes a fair bit on national security. There are many more Canadians, organizations and parliamentarians who are supporting the bill.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Chair, my questions will be directed through you to the Minister of Public Safety.

How many frontline CBSA officers are posted to the Canada-U.S. border?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Chair, there are 10,000 frontline officers, both CBSA and RCMP, who are deployed to secure our border.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with three of my colleagues.

How many CBSA officers, serving on the front line, are posted at the Lansdowne and Johnstown ports of entry?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I will be able to get that information for my colleague.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, how many net new frontline CBSA officers will be serving at the land borders between Canada and the U.S. as a result of the minister's bill?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, with an investment of \$1.3 billion we are making toward the border, we will have 1,000 CBSA and 1,000 new RCMP officers to secure the border.

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Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, by what date will they be at their posts?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we will be able to provide those operational details to the member in short order.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, how many shipping containers are scanned on a monthly basis at the Canada-U.S. border?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, again, I will be able to provide that information to my colleague at a later date.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, are there scanners at the ports of entry at Johnstown and Lansdowne to scan containers or trucks at the border?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, for operational reasons, I probably should not be answering that question.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, I would encourage the minister to get either numbers or some information, or we could both go to those ports of entry and take a look for ourselves, to see the lack of infrastructure to scan the cans that are coming across the border at those two locations.

How many firearms have been seized at the land borders between Canada and the United States?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, there have been a number of seizures of firearms in different operations. There was Operation Blizzard, which was completed recently. There was an earlier seizure of a number of firearms. I do not have the exact number, but in terms of—

• (1940)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, how many containers entering Canada have been found to contain fentanyl, smuggled guns—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we will be able to provide that information to my colleague.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, how many additional containers would be scanned as a result of the bill?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the bill is not looking specifically at scanning. It is a much broader bill—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes.

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Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, the government is spending \$342 million a year to collect legally registered firearms from licensed, trained and tested hunters, farmers and sport shooters.

How much money is being dedicated specifically to interdicting firearms at the border?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the investments we are making relate specifically to the program of buyback, and that is not going directly to anything other than the buyback program.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, that seems like an incredible missed opportunity, I can tell members, at all ports of entry, including those in my district at Johnstown and Lansdowne.

Minister, you said, “The actual crimes, the actual issues around bail are quite sound and they are embedded [and] codified in law right now.”

I have two questions for you: Do you think that current bail laws in the regime are working? Do you believe that Canadians feel safe?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Please address questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we look forward to bringing changes to the bail program, or bail reform. Of course, this is something that involves not just the federal government but also the provincial governments and municipalities as well.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Chair, I have asked the minister a number of questions seeking specifics on the bill prioritized as number two in the order, the first bill put forward in the Parliament. The minister has not been able to provide any of the details that would satisfy some of the most pressing issues facing our country right now.

Where does it say in the legislation that we will repeal any of the laws passed by the Liberals that have weakened bail conditions and that have allowed dangerous offenders to stay on our streets?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, as I have indicated earlier, this is not a bail reform bill. It is a border bill.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Chair, prior to the minister's 2015 election, he practised business, real estate and human international rights law, but never criminal law.

Is that correct?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, no, it is not correct. I did a fair amount of criminal work as well.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, in your previous role as the parliamentary secretary to former justice minister Lametti and your brief two-month appointment as justice minister this year, have you ever attended a courthouse to observe a bail hearing?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Please address all questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, while not recently, I have attended many bail hearings.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, has the minister observed a bail hearing since becoming Minister of Public Safety?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, in the three weeks since I was appointed, no.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, does he intend to?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, in 2022, former justice minister Lametti said at committee that Canada's bail system was strong and sound despite calls for reform from premiers and police. The minister doubled down on that statement on April 15, stating that bail in Canada is “quite sound”. Does he still believe that?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, that was obviously taken out of context, but we will be working on bail reform. We look forward to working with the opposition on it.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, those were the minister's exact words during an election debate.

Will the minister admit it is putting violent offenders back on the street?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we need to do better on bail. We look forward to bringing forward legislation to that effect.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, the Prime Minister recently appointed Lametti as principal secretary in the PMO. It is the same minister who was fired by Justin Trudeau, who authorized the illegal declaration of an emergency and who gutted and weakened our criminal justice system. Are you proud of that appointment?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The member must go through the Chair.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, former minister Lametti is an outstanding Canadian of true integrity. He is an academic, and his stature is beyond reproach in this Parliament.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, former justice minister Virani said at committee that he was proud of the fact that he and his government delivered bail reform through the passage of Bill C-48. Does the minister still hold that same belief?

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Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, Bill C-48 was a result of consultations and engagements we had with the provinces and territories. We will continue to do those engagements and bring forward the appropriate—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, on the same day as his swearing in, former minister Virani said that Canadians do not feel unsafe in their communities, that the perception of crime is largely in their heads and that an increase in crime is “empirically...unlikely”.

Does the minister agree with that statement?

• (1945)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I cannot speak for former minister Virani, but I can say that the police chief of the city of Toronto has indicated that auto thefts are down by 39%, home invasions by 42%, homicides by 67% and shootings by 46%. I confirmed with him—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: That is time.

The hon. member.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, the minister promised to tighten bail rules just last week, but why did he not do that in Bill C-2?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is a border bill, not a bail bill.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, the minister called catch-and-release a myth. How does he explain repeat violent offenders' committing more crimes while on bail?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we look forward to working toward enhancing bail.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, if the bail system is quite sound and working, why are police chiefs, premiers and victims' families saying the opposite?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I have addressed this issue a number of times. I will reiterate that we will be bringing forward reform to our bail system.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, the minister and his crime czar are saying they are getting tough on violent crime. Why did the minister vote to eliminate mandatory jail time for gun and repeat violent offences in Bill C-5?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I do not have time to answer this question in a robust way, but I do look forward to having a conversation on this with the member.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, the government has kept in place mandatory minimum penalties for auto thefts, yet eliminated them for trafficking, production, importation and exportation of fentanyl, a deadly poison that has killed 50,000 Canadians since the minister's election. Are you proud of that?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The member must go through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, on April 28, Canadians gave this government a mandate to do many things, including addressing issues around the criminal justice system, as well as securing the border.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, why is the minister prioritizing property theft over deadly drugs?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, my number one priority since being appointed to this role has been to bring forward Bill C-2.

Larry Brock: Mr. Chair, will the minister apologize to the victims and families who have lost loved ones for his deliberate inaction on fentanyl sentencing?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I have been in this role for three weeks.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Chair, through you, does the minister believe our justice system puts the needs of criminals ahead of victims?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, we have a well-developed justice system that balances the individual rights of those accused with the collective rights of Canadians.

Rhonda Kirkland: Are you saying that victims' rights and criminals' rights are balanced?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Again, the member must go through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is a balancing act. I can assure the member that the rights of victims are crucial for us.

Rhonda Kirkland: Does the minister think victims are adequately respected in the Canadian criminal justice system?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we can always do better.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, should victims be granted more rights than they currently have?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I am open to having conversations on what that could look like.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, I understand offenders who have been convicted of violent crimes do have rights. They are given access to many services and resources including substance abuse treatment, anger and violence management, sex offender treatment, cognitive behavioural therapy, education and literacy programs, employment skills training, psychiatric care and counselling, addiction treatment, risk and needs assessments, housing and employment assistance, life skills and parenting programs. Of course, all of these are at a cost to Canadian taxpayers.

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Can the minister tell me whether these services and resources are provided to victims of violent crime as well?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the issues identified by my friend opposite relate to those who are incarcerated. It is essential that those who are incarcerated be reformed and have the skills they need to cope in society if and when they are released.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, what about victims? Do they have any sort of need when they are in society after being victims of violent crimes?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is essential that we support survivors who are victims of violence and who are impacted by the criminal justice system.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, offender supports are centrally coordinated and funded, while victim supports are quite fragmented.

Do you think that is fair?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Please ask your questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, a lot of this is undertaken by the provinces. If we look at the work of CSC, it is done—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, clearly the minister will not take responsibility.

Earlier I listed a number of services and resources that offenders receive. Can the minister name just one that victims receive?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, unfortunately, I did not write them down, so I cannot recall exactly what those were.

• (1950)

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, I am happy to read a few of them: cognitive behavioural therapy, education and literacy programs, psychiatric care and counselling, addiction treatment, risk and needs assessments, employment assistance, parenting programs and all sorts of things like that.

Is there one thing in that list that victims have access to?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it ought to be quite different for victims. I know there are mental health supports, supports with counsel and supports that are embedded when someone goes through trial. They are unique to survivors and victims and are quite separate from someone who is incarcerated.

Rhonda Kirkland: Earlier I listed them all and clearly you cannot name one. Is that correct?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Please ask your questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I have contextualized that answer.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, clearly we do not have any answers to that.

Is the minister aware of any time in the past, let us say, five years that a victim was denied their right to attend a parole hearing?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I am familiar with instances, yes.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, in these instances, we know that even a pandemic could not revoke an offender's rights or alter the date book in any way.

Why were victims not afforded that same right?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, that is a matter that should be dealt with by the parole board.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, has the member ever seen a letter from the parole board to a victim of a crime?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I have not in the last three weeks in this portfolio.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Chair, in one of these letters to a victim of crime, whose father was bludgeoned to death by an axe murderer in Oshawa when I was a teenager, she was told that the parole board would make a decision and—

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I am sorry to hear that she is impacted by this.

Karim Bardeesy (Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be speaking for about 10 minutes and will be addressing my questions to the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade.

A lot of us have just been through a very energetic campaign. I do not think a year ago we would have been talking about internal trade in this chamber. I do not know if we would have been talking about national unity in the way we are in the estimates and in the platform we are putting together, which the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade referred to in her opening remarks.

I think it is really due to the awakening that happened first in November and then into the winter months with the threat to Canadian sovereignty. I really awoke to this in my campaigning and my canvassing in Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park. As I said in my maiden speech, we are an urban riding that is a little more than 16 square kilometres between the Humber River, Lake Ontario and the transmission lines and the train tracks in the west part of Toronto.

When we think of urban ridings, of people who are engaged in such a small space, there is often an assumption that they have very parochial urban concerns. Indeed, the people in my riding did have a lot of concerns that were very specific to their needs, around transportation, around poverty and around economic development.

There is more poverty in my riding than in other ridings. There are lots of different kinds of need, but across the demographic groups in the riding, whether it was in the Parkdale area, the Roncesvalles area, where I live, Liberty Village, which is full of young professionals, Bloor West Village, Swansea, the valley down by the Humber River, the Stock Yards area, Rockcliffe-Smythe or the Junction, there was a common theme around putting some of our economic differences aside, putting some of our more parochial concerns aside and really taking the national interest.

There was a really specific interest in this idea that we needed to break down these internal trade barriers. Canadians really have to wake up to an issue to really land on something that can sometimes be a bit technical, that can be in the area of very specific professions or sectors, yet they awoke to it.

When the Prime Minister was talking about this need to break down internal trade barriers, and when our platform came out with this very strong commitment around having one Canadian economy and taking all federal actions necessary by July 1, people awoke to that. They asked me at the doors about that, and they actually contextualized it a bit more broadly. They said they wanted me to do that work because they are interested in what their fellow citizens in Alberta, the Maritimes, Quebec, B.C., the Prairies and the north, what other people in their economy and country, are experiencing.

People awoke to the fact that people in those provinces and people outside urban Ontario had something to offer and that we were stronger together. The thing that was attacking us meant we had to wake up to the need to, as the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade mentioned, find those things that were holding us back. They did not have that 7% figure on the tip of their tongues, but they knew there was something amiss.

I think it comes from a very deep part of our history in Canada, which is that when we have been our most ambitious, when we have been building nations, it is because we have been breaking down barriers. In fact, we have been using transportation systems in part to do that. Canada is an incredibly improbable country. Ninety-five per cent or so of our population lives within 100 miles of this U.S. border.

Growing up, I recall learning up about how New France, as it was called then, was settled with the seigneurie, the very narrow strips of land, which is the way a lot of agriculture in Quebec is still organized. The St. Lawrence River was so important to the nation-building project then.

We learned about other waterways, such as the St. Lawrence Seaway, that were important for nation-building projects. I recommend that anyone who lives in an urban riding visit a waterway. For people in southern Ontario, it is actually quite close to check out the Welland Canal. It is an incredible piece of engineering that has opened trade routes that were previously unimaginable. There

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is the Trent-Severn Waterway. A whole number of nation-building projects based in transportation connect us together.

For those in an urban riding, the biggest piece of machinery they might see is a TTC train, a GO train or an UP Express train, but by going to the Trent-Severn Waterway or the Welland Canal, we can see the full might of Canadian industry on display. It is very important to see these and it is very inspiring.

• (1955)

Transportation has always been at the heart of nation-building projects. Of course, we have the legendary story of the Trans-Canada railway lines that we built that unified this country from east to west. We did make some mistakes along the way in doing that, but it was a vital nation-building project.

I was recently reading *Team of Rivals*, which is a book about Abraham Lincoln putting together a unity cabinet in the Civil War era. It is a fascinating book. It tells the story about the politics and the economic debates that were happening in the United States before the Civil War. One of the key issues that really divided Americans at the time was the issue of internal improvements, of how much to invest in harbours, light craft and waterways, and all those things that could connect regional economies to each other.

We did this work in Canada. The United States did that work throughout the 19th and 20th century. We continue to do it. It is a key way of uniting and defining us as a country that, again, we have this improbable country that is so close to the U.S. border.

More recently, I have been part of efforts that tried to create more of a national economy, in my earlier life as a policy director to two Ontario premiers. It is hard work.

The Minister of Transport and Internal Trade referred to the New West Partnership, a really important good idea, a Conservative idea primarily at the time, and one that Ontario tried to adopt in similar ways for its local circumstances.

There was a time when Ontario and Quebec had very aligned provincial governments and they really tried to make concerted efforts to align their economies, but it is hard work. It is hard people work. It is often hard engineering work. We would like to have more electricity cross between eastern Canada and western Canada, but finicky interties and all those things get in the way of really connecting our economies.

The human work is just as challenging. I will never forget a briefing when we had the the regional chair of the County of Brant. They were telling us how important their local economic development initiative was compared to that of the City of Brantford, which was within the region of Brant, and how they had to have their own external trade promotion efforts.

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I think moments like what we have faced in the last six months have really awakened us to the fact that we have to start to bring some of these issues and initiatives together. What are the internal improvements of the 21st century? They are some of the major investments included in the estimates. I will point out the national trade corridors fund, with \$826 million under the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade's portfolio.

I will point out the investments in ports. We have 17 major ports across Canada and the estimates refer to new ports in Montreal and the proposed new port of the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 in Vancouver. We also have the nation-building projects that were discussed in Saskatoon, which include rail, electricity and other projects that will be tackled there. We also have rules to tackle.

I am from New Brunswick so I cannot help but make a little tribute in this House to Gerard Comeau, who brought some of that Quebec beer across the border. He took his fight all the way to the Supreme Court and won. Thank God he did, because he awakened people in this House and elsewhere to the fact that, in my riding, I have High Park Brewery and Junction Craft Brewery. They may be great breweries, and they are great breweries, but do I need to be protected by my government from trying someone else in Canada's beer?

As a New Brunswicker, I truly believe that George Riordon's maple syrup in Pokeshaw is the best maple syrup. However, I am now an Ontarian. As long as it is maple syrup that is all that counts; just none of that table syrup on my pancakes. However, I do not want to be protected from Ontario or Quebec maple syrup. Vermont is another story.

This is hard work. I know there are lots of nation-building projects under the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade's portfolio and a lot of hard work to start to expand our imaginations. I look forward to talking about that more.

• (2000)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will start by congratulating my colleague, the member for Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, on his election. I think there may be people here who care about him a lot and who share my pride and delight in hearing him rise in the House.

What a learned, very human and personal set of comments that was about internal trade. Who knew it would be so fun? This is ultimately about doing something that does not cost us anything and makes us richer.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Chair, we heard in the minister's remarks, which I referred to a bit, the many kinds of partnerships that already exist and the many kinds of efforts that have been made over the years to reduce internal trade barriers. I wonder, in her opinion, what she sees as the most exciting opportunities in her portfolio, or what the most egregious internal trade barrier is that she really wants to tackle in her work.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, who does not love the maple syrup example we have just heard?

Labour mobility is something that also speaks to a lot of Canadians. All of us know examples of families who have moved across

the country for the job of one person, and it just takes the partner too long to be able to work. It is frustrating for families, and it hurts our economy.

Personally, I think trucking is really important too, and I will talk about that in my next answer.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Chair, I will pick up on that remark from the minister.

Trucking is one of the top employment sectors in Canada. We know that the sector is going through lots of change, as technology is changing fast, the working conditions that truckers experience are changing rapidly, and the manifest of what they are doing is changing fast because the economy is changing so rapidly. We also know from the Minister of Public Safety's portfolio that there are concerns about what is happening at the border.

This is a sector and a profession that is not talked about very much and, increasingly in southern Ontario anyway, is quite racialized. It is key to unlocking a lot of the economic potential in southern Ontario in particular.

My question is this: What kinds of opportunities exist in the trucking sector, where there are internal trade barriers or labour barriers, that can help people move back and forth and practise this very important profession?

• (2005)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, the fact is that it is too hard to drive a truck across Canada. It should be as easy to drive a truck from Halifax harbour to the port of Vancouver as it is to drive between Toronto and Kitchener. There is no reason that crossing a provincial border should be an obstacle to moving goods and people across the country, but it is.

At the FMM, Premier Houston of Nova Scotia, and I do not think he will mind me saying this, said that if something is good enough to drive in any part of Canada, it's good enough to drive in Nova Scotia. I think that attitude of "Let us trust each other; let us really build one Canadian economy," is going to be so powerful in making all of us richer. Actually, it is going to bring us together as a community, because it will make it easier for us to work together.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Chair, in the minister's portfolio, one of the main ways of binding people, again, is transportation. I know that passenger rail is also under the minister's portfolio. Could she share what the plans and estimates are to help support passenger rail, which connects people across the country?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I would say high-speed rail between Quebec City and Windsor; what a great nation-building project.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time, and I have some questions for the Minister of Public Safety. The minister should know that these are direct questions, and I hope the answers will be similarly direct.

Business of Supply

When does the amnesty period end for firearms banned by order in council on May 1, 2020?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, let me take a moment to congratulate my colleague for being here. It will be in October.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, will all firearms banned in that, and in subsequent orders in council, be seized by then?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, no.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, is the government extending the amnesty?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we are looking at options.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, how much has the Liberal government spent so far on the confiscation scheme?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the total amount budgeted is \$597.9 million over three years.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, the question was this: How much has been spent to date?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair—

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, the government's own numbers in September of last year said it was \$67.2 million. How has the amount gone down in the intervening months?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is \$20 million for the first phase of the business buyback. More will be allocated and is allocated towards the individual gun owners.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, how much has been spent in total by the government between May 1, 2020 and now?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is \$20 million.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, how has the number gotten \$50 million smaller than in September 2024?

• (2010)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, part of the cost goes towards administration and setting up the program, but on the buyback itself it is \$20 million that has been spent.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, is the minister giving a number that is deliberately deflated?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, is the member accusing me of misleading? I do not think he is, but no, I am giving numbers that are accurate.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, I was asking for the total, but I will move on and we will look at this later. When the figures were presented by the government in September 2024, \$11.5 million had gone towards software, logistics and communication support. Did any of that go to any of the suppliers or vendors involved in developing the ArriveCAN app?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, no.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, how many guns have been seized so far under the buyback confiscation scheme?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is about 12,000.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, what was the price per gun the government paid for these?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I will be able to get back to my colleague.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, how many firearms does the government believe have been prohibited that will be collected under this confiscation scheme?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the anticipation is about 179,000.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, are all of those firearms semi-automatics?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I do not believe so.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, what other types of firearms have been banned that the government will be seizing?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, those that are scheduled to be bought back will be removed. I cannot tell the member the specific ones, but they are in the schedule.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, does the minister have an RPAL?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, can the member repeat that question?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, I will rephrase. Does the minister know what an RPAL is?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I do not.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, does the minister know what the CFSC is?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I do not, no.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, I will stipulate that it is the Canadian Firearms Safety Course, which all gun owners in Canada have to do to get their firearms licence. Has the minister ever done the Canadian Firearms Safety Course?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is my third week on the job. No, I have not.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, does the minister know what safety classes and safety demands are expected of law-abiding Canadian gun owners?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is not about law-abiding gun owners.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, how can the minister make that claim when he does not know the basic fundamentals of law-abiding gun ownership in this country?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, Bill C-21 is meant to get serious, dangerous weapons off our streets.

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Andrew Lawton: Mr. Chair, will the minister commit to taking the Canadian Firearms Safety Course, so he will know what he is talking about?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I do not intend to purchase a firearm or use a firearm.

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Chair, in my home of Campbell River, 3,500 tablets of a deadly and addictive opioid that were being trafficked were seized by the RCMP.

Does the minister believe in strong sentences for distributing, funding and profiting off these deadly and addictive drugs?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, fentanyl and other opioids impact communities across Canada, and my sympathies go to the people of Campbell River. We do need to ensure that there are strict penalties for those who commit these crimes.

Aaron Gunn: That sounded good, Mr. Chair. Unfortunately, these deadly and addictive opioids are actually part of the government's very own so-called safe supply program. The drugs are actually being distributed and funded by the minister's own government.

If the minister is claiming that he is going to have stiff sentences, that the Liberals are going to crack down on the sources of these addictive drugs, who exactly is the minister planning to crack down on? Is it the Liberals themselves?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I understand this is a program that was administered by the Province of British Columbia.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, does the minister deny that the federal government helped fund this program?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, as Canadians and as governments, we need to do everything in our power to ensure that people are—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, the fact of the matter is that the federal government funded this so-called safe supply program that has now ended up in the hands of drug dealers and drug traffickers, resulting in the seizure that I just mentioned.

Does the minister regret and apologize for funding these programs?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, in the three weeks since I was appointed, I have been working on a bill, Bill C-2, that would ensure that we continue to fight fentanyl at our borders.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, does the Minister of Public Safety believe the Liberal government's experiment to decriminalize hard drugs, including fentanyl, crack cocaine and crystal meth, has been a success in my home province of British Columbia?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, that is factually incorrect. This government decriminalized cannabis and did not go beyond that.

• (2015)

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, can I just get some clarification from the minister? Is he saying that the government did not decriminalize

fentanyl, crystal meth and crack cocaine in my home province of British Columbia?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: No, Mr. Chair. It happened as part of a request by the British Columbia government for a short period of time.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, the minister must know that the policy of decriminalizing these hard drugs still exists. It is set to expire in January 2026. Will the minister commit to ending this failed policy once and for all?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we look forward to working with our provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure that there are no hard drugs available within their respective jurisdictions.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, under the Liberal drug decriminalization policy, which actually exists right now for fentanyl, crystal meth and crack cocaine, drug dealers are allowed to store more than 1,000 lethal doses of fentanyl in their homes.

Does the minister believe that this policy makes Canadians safer?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is a question that should be addressed to the Minister of Health.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, the minister says to address it to the Minister of Health. Frontline RCMP officers have told me decriminalization ties their hands behind their backs and makes it easier for drug dealers and drug traffickers to push their illegal and addictive substances.

Does he not agree with these frontline RCMP officers?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is a question that should be posed to the police of jurisdiction in British Columbia.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, ultimately, does the minister agree that this is a matter of federal jurisdiction? This is the Criminal Code, therefore it is the government's decision and the government's responsibility.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is a committee of the whole to address the issues around my portfolio, which is public safety. The issue is relating to health, and I suggest that this question be posed to the health minister.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, does the minister believe that someone who is high on crystal meth, wandering the streets of downtown Vancouver or Toronto, poses a risk to public safety?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, again, this is something that should be addressed to the Minister of Health.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Chair, this is the same question: Is someone who is high on crystal meth an issue of public safety, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is a matter that should be addressed to the Minister of Health.

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Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC): Mr. Chair, we just had another election, and again foreign interference was a factor in that election. In fact, a Liberal candidate had to be dropped just before the election because of it. It has been exposed that Beijing was helping the Prime Minister, and the RCMP has linked foreign interference to organized crime in Canada. Actually, the House passed a foreign agent registry last year. Where is that registry?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I look forward to establishing the registry. As my friend is aware, it is something that requires the consent of Parliament.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, the Liberals said that this was a priority for them. Can we see the registry before the summer vacation?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I look forward to bringing it forward and will be consulting my friend on the appointment itself.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, as members are aware, for the last couple of years, we have had some very high-profile cases of extortion in Canada. Families would spend their whole life building up a business, and along would come sometimes international gangsters, or local ones, who would shoot at their house, commit arson at their home and at their business and extort these families for millions of dollars, yet the government has done nothing to protect them in the last couple of years.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I believe that is more of a comment.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, why has the government not done anything to protect these families?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the issue of extortion is a very important one. Many communities are impacted by it, particularly in the greater Toronto area, and in places like Edmonton, as well as—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, the Liberals say that it is an issue, but they have not brought any solutions forward to help these families. In fact, when the police come to these families and say that their life is in danger and that they should leave and hide out, the police have also been telling the families that they do not have the resources to protect them. Why do police in our country not have the resources necessary to protect Canadians?

• (2020)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we will be investing in 1,000 RCMP officers in order to keep our country safe, and this includes addressing issues of extortion.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, can the minister tell us which cities those 1,000 RCMP officers will be delegated to?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the RCMP recruits from the best and the brightest. It is in the process of recruitment and then training. The officers will be deployed as required, based on operational needs.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, what about the city police forces? Many of the instances of extortion are happening in Canada's largest cities. What about those police forces? Why do they not have the resources necessary?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, there are resources available, including through Bill C-2, which we introduced this week. I know that many police services are doing a great job in their local jurisdiction. They are working with the support of the RCMP in their respective regions.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, why did the minister's government repeal the mandatory minimum penalty for extortion with a restricted firearm in Bill C-5?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the issue of extortion, as members know, is critically important. We are adding additional tools for police and law enforcement to be able to tackle the issue.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, will the Liberals restore the penalty for extortion with a restricted firearm, which the Liberals repealed?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we will be bringing forward criminal justice reform later in the fall.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, the Liberals are not committing to restoring that aspect, which they repealed. Will they make arson an aggravating factor in extortion? Arson is used as a weapon in many of these cases. Will the Liberals make arson an aggravating factor?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I believe it is already an aggravating factor in sentencing.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, I introduced a bill in the last Parliament that would bring in stronger sentences for extortion, with a mandatory minimum penalty of three years, four years with a firearm, and five years if somebody is committing the offence with organized crime. Will the Liberals adopt those measures into the laws that they are bringing in, since they have taken so many other ideas from the Conservative side?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we will be making smart criminal justice reforms.

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be speaking for about 10 minutes and addressing questions to the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade for five minutes.

Our government is deeply committed to building a transportation system that is not only safe, secure and efficient but also sustainable, innovative, and one that strengthens a connected and resilient Canadian economy. These priorities are reflected throughout Transport Canada's main estimates for the 2025-26 fiscal year. I would like to highlight a few key examples.

First and foremost, the safety and security of Canadians remains at the core of our government and has been reflected in Transport Canada's mandate. This priority is evident in many initiatives, including the main estimates. I will speak to a few.

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In my province, the continued funding of the Lac-Mégantic rail bypass project shows that we are determined to divert rail traffic away from the centre of this community, prioritizing the residents' safety and peace of mind. Safety is further supported by numerous Transport Canada programs. One example is the rail safety improvement program. It funds projects that enhance rail safety through infrastructure upgrades, research, new infrastructure and measures to address climate change and extreme weather impacts along rail lines.

Rail has played a significant role in our country's history and in our economy. As of 2024, Canada's rail freight sector continues to be a cornerstone of the national economy, facilitating the movement of goods across the country. In 2024, Canadian railways transported approximately 377 million tonnes of freight, marking a slight increase of 0.5% from the previous year. This volume underscores the sector's pivotal role in domestic trade and economic activity. Previous years indicated operating revenues of \$22 billion; this emphasizes the sector's essential role in supporting domestic trade and economic growth.

I also think of the airports capital assistance program, which provides eligible airports with funding aimed at maintaining safety. When we consider both civil aviation and aerospace manufacturing, the aerospace sector's total contribution to Canada's GDP is estimated at approximately \$36 billion, or about 1.6% of national GDP. This figure underscores the sector's vital role in Canada's economic framework. Supporting the aviation sector has been crucial to movement of both people and cargo. I think also of the road safety transfer payment program, which supports initiatives that reduce road-related collisions, injuries and fatalities.

Programs such as these are essential in enhancing protective measures across our transportation network, and we will see them reflected under several other initiatives in the estimates.

The efficiency of our transportation network is just as important for Canada's prosperity. Today more than ever, it is vital to make strategic investments in infrastructure and supply chains to support a strong and competitive economy, and for Canada to have a more integrated and unified economy, we must reduce barriers to internal trade. That is why the Government of Canada is actively advancing internal free trade.

Approximately 528 billion dollars' worth of goods and services were traded internally, accounting for about 18.8% of Canada's gross domestic product. This step is vital to unleashing the country's full economic potential. To achieve this goal, we must have resilient supply chains that allow for the reliable delivery of goods to people, where and when they need them.

Our government remains focused on initiatives that ensure the seamless, consistent movement of people and goods. These efforts help keep life more affordable. They also strengthen Canadian businesses and reduce vulnerabilities in our trade corridors. Economists estimate that removing internal trade barriers could boost Canada's GDP by approximately \$200 billion, about \$4,800 per person, highlighting the substantial untapped economic potential.

We have heard our Prime Minister emphasize our commitment to nation building and to projects to further support our country's

growth. If we turn to the estimates, we will see that our commitments are reflected in transfer payments, such as the national trade corridors fund. The NTCF provides funding for projects that address transportation bottlenecks, improve the fluidity and resilience of supply chains and support trade diversification. By investing in ports, railways, highways, airports, and border infrastructure, the NTCF helps ensure that goods move efficiently across the country and to international markets.

● (2025)

These priorities are also aligned with the work of the national supply chain office, whose ongoing efforts to strengthen and oversee Canada's supply chains are directly supported in the estimates.

I would also like to acknowledge Via Rail, a Crown corporation integral to the efficiency of our transportation network. This year's estimates include an increase in funding for Via Rail, supporting both operational costs and the renewal of long-distance, regional and remote fleets. Furthermore, Via HFR-Via TGF Inc., the subsidiary advancing the transformational high-speed rail project now known as Alto, will be receiving increased funding to move forward with the next project phase. These investments signal our dedication to a modern, interconnected Canada both now and in the future. Importantly, these investments will also help build a more sustainable transportation system, which is another key priority of Transport Canada.

Our vision for transportation is not just safer and more efficient but also greener. The main estimates support this vision through funding for the green shipping corridor program, an initiative enabling the transition to cleaner, low-emission marine transportation. This includes investments in greener vessels, shore power systems and quieter, environmentally friendly port technologies. By driving down marine emissions, Canada is opening new doors for innovators, safeguarding our environment and advancing sustainable shipping solutions.

Today is actually World Environment Day, and we are leading on action to protect the environment. The oceans protection plan programs are also taken into consideration in the main estimates. They continue to improve marine emergency prevention, protect coastal ecosystems and also promote partnerships with first nations and coastal communities. The plan also supports research and innovation to ensure that Canadian waters remain safe and clean for generations to come.

These are a few examples of investments that demonstrate how we are building a safer, more secure, more efficient and more sustainable transportation network. Our government knows that it is important for people and goods to be able to move safely and easily, while reducing our environmental footprint. I look forward to working with members of the House to see our vision and to build a strong Canadian economy.

● (2030)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, let me begin by congratulating my colleague on his recent election and welcoming him to the House and, if I may, to our Liberal team. It is a very distinguished riding he represents, and we are all very glad to have him with us on the benches.

I was really glad to hear the member talk about the importance of transport and the importance of rail to our country. We all know, and we heard from the member of Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, about the iconic role that the railways played in knitting our country together. As we heard from my colleague from Quebec, railways are about our economy, they are about moving goods quickly across our vast land, and they are also about people and about people getting around in an effective, environmentally friendly way.

Eric St-Pierre: Mr. Chair, airports play a crucial role in connecting communities, supporting economic growth and facilitating both domestic and international travel. Many of Canada's airports, however, are facing challenges related to aging infrastructure that could impact their efficiency, safety and ability to accommodate increasing passenger volumes in the years ahead.

Given the vital importance of these transportation hubs to our economy and daily lives, can the government confirm its commitment to investing in modernization and expansion of airports across the country? Additionally, how does the government plan to prioritize funding for these aging infrastructures to ensure that they meet future demands, while supporting regional development, job creation and sustainable growth?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I can absolutely confirm that. Although I have been transport minister for only a few weeks, it has been a real pleasure to begin meeting with the leaders of our great airports across the country and speaking with them.

Canadians depend on airports to get around, to go to work and to spend time with our families. This summer, I think a lot of us are going to be taking holidays in Canada and relying on our airports to help us do that. It is a really important question, and it is absolutely a priority of our government to invest in our airports.

Eric St-Pierre: Mr. Chair, air transportation plays a vital role in connecting remote and northern communities with the rest of Canada, often serving as a primary link for residents to access essential services, goods, health care, education and economic opportunities. Given the unique challenges these communities face due to geography, weather and limited infrastructure, what are some of the specific ways that improving and expanding air transportation services can help strengthen these connections?

Further, with better air transportation support for not only day-to-day travel but also long-term social and economic development in

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these regions, are there any particular strategies or investments the government is considering to enhance the reliability, affordability and accessibility of air travel for people living in remote and northern parts of the country?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, that is a great question. Earlier today, I had the privilege of meeting with the Premier of the Northwest Territories and with two chiefs from that beautiful part of the Canadian north. A principal issue they discussed with me was transport and air travel. They are also very interested in improving roads.

I really believe that today, at a time when Canada's sovereignty is being challenged, at a time when securing our presence in our north is more important than ever, ensuring that we have good, effective transport, whether it is roads or airports, is more important than ever.

● (2035)

Eric St-Pierre: Mr. Chair, how does internal trade between provinces help strengthen Canada's economy and create more opportunity for Canadians? In a country as geographically vast and economically diverse as Canada, the ability for goods, services and labour to move freely across provincial and territorial borders is critical to national prosperity. What are some of the key ways that reducing trade barriers between provinces can lead to increased productivity, support small and medium-sized businesses and create new job opportunities in both urban and rural areas?

What role can government play at both federal and provincial levels to facilitate smoother interprovincial trade and ensure that all Canadians, regardless of where they live, benefit from a truly unified national economy?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, that is yet another good question. We are just getting so many good questions right now.

I really hope that one of the issues that, and this is perhaps rare but it exists, we will be able to agree on in the House is the need to lift barriers to interprovincial trade. It is something that premiers agreed on, including Conservative premiers, NDP premiers and Liberal premiers.

The numbers are actually astonishing. It is really astonishing that these measures, which do not need to cost us a penny, can increase Canada's GDP by 4%. They can add \$200 billion to our economy. There is a human benefit from this as well. That 4% of GDP is about Canadians working together more closely and doing more business with each other.

This is a policy that does not cost us any money, will make us richer and will draw our country more closely together. What is not to like?

Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time.

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Bill C-2 only addresses fentanyl production with a focus on a precursor in part 2. Our borders are weaker when there are no consequences for drug dealers. What minimum sentencing will Bill C-2 impose on fentanyl dealers?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, Bill C-2 is a borders bill and does not include overall criminal justice reform.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome the member for Markham—Unionville to the House.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, what is the minimum intended sentencing for fentanyl dealers?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, that is a question best posed to the Minister of Justice.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, is there even an intention then to have a minimum sentencing for fentanyl dealers?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, again, that is a question best posed to the Minister of Justice.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, Canadian communities are not secure when repeat offenders can be released on bail within hours of arrest. Why was the repeal of the Liberal Bill C-75 catch-and-release policies not in Bill C-2?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, as I have indicated a number of times, this is a border bill and not a bail bill.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, when will Bill C-75 be repealed?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is a bill relating to the border. We look forward to bringing bail reform later on this year.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, can the minister then tell us when the repeal of Bill C-75 be made?

● (2040)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, again, this is a question that should be posed to Minister of Justice.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, Canadian communities are not secure when the producers and traffickers of fentanyl avoid jail time. Why was the repeal of the Liberal Bill C-5 on house arrest policies not in Bill C-2?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is a bill relating to the border and not relating to sentencing.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, the same question then, when will Bill C-5 be repealed?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, again, this relates to a border bill that we introduced. We are hoping to get support from friends opposite. This is not about criminal justice reform.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, Canadian communities are not secure when addiction victims constitute a demand structure for the flow of fentanyl and its precursors. Why was the treatment for our addicted community members left out of the Liberal's Bill C-2?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is a bill relating to the border. The issues on fentanyl are quite serious. There are a number of provisions in the bill that do address the flow of fentanyl into Canada as well as the precursors.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, did the minister ever consider the addicted community at all, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the issue of addictions is quite serious and impacts communities across Canada. It is a matter for the Minister of Health, but it is something that, of course, as a government we are—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, Bill C-2 addresses money laundering and terrorist activity financing issues with monetary penalties. Where two milligrams of fentanyl can kill a person and the mass trafficking of fentanyl can be considered mass murder, could Bill C-2 be amended to recognize the trafficking of fentanyl as a terrorist or mass murder activity?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, earlier we listed seven cartels as terrorist entities within Canada's Criminal Code. Amendments, of course, can come as part of the process of the bill going through committee.

Michael Ma: Mr. Chair, Bill C-2 makes progress in dealing with convicted offenders in part 13. Why does the bill not treat convicted fentanyl traffickers with the same depth of approach?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the matter that my friend identified relates to a registry that already exists.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Chair, does the minister know the meaning of the word “intifada”?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, yes, I do, but I do not understand the relevance.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, this is the estimates. This is committee of the whole. We are not here to talk about the bill. This is the minister in charge of public safety, and I am here to talk about the public safety of the Jewish community.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, he is entitled to—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, does the minister know the meaning of the word “intifada”?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, what is it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is something that is quite well known. I do not plan to give a perfect definition of it today.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, it is an armed rebellion.

Does the minister understand that when someone in Canada is chanting to globalize the intifada, they are calling for violence? Does he understand that or not?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the issue of anti-Semitism is something that impacts the Jewish community. It is one we, as a government, will address and we will—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, I have a very simple question. Does the minister agree that the call for intifada is an incitement to violence, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I do not intend to respond to this particular question. The issue of the safety and security of the Jewish community is critically—

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, it is outrageous that the Liberal government, the minister standing here, would not even acknowledge that for 18 months the chant “intifada” has been chanted on Canada's streets and that he would not recognize the basic definition of what intifada is.

I will give you one more opportunity. Is the word “intifada” an incitement to violence or not, from one professional to another?

• (2045)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I will just remind the member to speak through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the safety and security of the Jewish community is incredibly important. I know its members have been impacted greatly by a number of world events. My responsibility is to ensure their safety and security in Canada, and that is what I intend to do.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, for 18 months, Jewish Canadians have been subjected to incitements to violence without repercussions.

What does the minister have to say about that?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I intend to work closely with the Jewish community, as well as all communities impacted by hate but particularly the Jewish community, in order to ensure that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, the minister would not even acknowledge that intifada is a call to violence.

Does he agree that when the Prime Minister accuses Israel of genocide on the campaign trail, he endangers the Jewish community?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, my responsibility as the Minister for Public Safety is the security of all Canadians, including Jewish Canadians.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, located in North York is the Bais Chaya Mushka school for Jewish girls.

Has the minister heard of that school?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: I have, Mr. Chair.

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Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, that girls' school was shot at three times.

Did the minister know that?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, is it acceptable that a Jewish girls' school was shot at three times?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, absolutely not. No school should be shot at, particularly—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, no school should be shot at; there is no “particularly”.

Why has the minister not done anything about it?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, in my three weeks in this portfolio, I have already reached out to a number of individuals from the Jewish community. I look forward to engaging—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, empty words are the only thing we hear from the government. I cannot point to a single thing the Liberals have done. Firebombings of Jewish businesses and synagogues are now routine. Instead of standing up for the Jewish community and protecting us, the government has been thanked by Hamas twice.

Why is the minister failing to protect the Jewish community?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, my role is to protect all Canadians, including members of the Jewish community. That is why, as part of the community security program, we have over \$95 million in investments over five years to ensure that places of worship, particularly, are secured.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, first of all, it is \$20 million, not \$95 million, and that is for all institutions in all communities. On day one on the job, the Prime Minister gave Gaza \$100 million. The Liberals gave Gaza more money on day one than for the security of all communities and all institutions. Is that not correct?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the issue of foreign affairs is outside my expertise, and I will not be able to answer that question.

Roman Baber: Mr. Chair, why does the government care to give more money to Gaza than it gives to protect all communities and all institutions?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, in my role as Minister of Public Safety, it is critically important that Canadians are protected, including Jewish Canadians.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Chair, what are the classifications of firearms?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, what I can tell the member is that Bill C-21 addresses a number of concerns we have heard from all Canadians, but it is to ensure—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, I wonder if he is getting passed a note right now with them.

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Without looking at that note, what are the classifications for firearms in Canada? He is the public safety minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, they are restricted, non-restricted and prohibited.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, this is the public safety minister, and somebody passed him a note with those classifications. Does the public safety minister not know the classifications of firearms?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the questions before us today involve Bill C-21, and I will advise the House that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, the classification of firearms has nothing to do with that. We are not talking about Bill C-21. We are talking about whether something as basic as how a firearm is classified is known by the public safety minister.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the issue is about Bill C-21. Our intention is to ensure that law-abiding gun owners have the ability to hold on to their guns. At the same time, we are taking—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, the minister is talking about law-abiding gun owners, but he does not even know what classification would be owned by somebody or not owned by somebody. How is that possible?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the gun buyback program is in its early stages. We have already bought back 12,000 firearms.

• (2050)

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, what category of guns are being bought back?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we look forward to buying those back from individuals. We are expecting about 180,000 units in total.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, what classifications of firearms are being bought back?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the RCMP will be implementing the buyback program, and we look forward to ensuring—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, what classifications are being bought back?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, from individuals who have weapons that they should not have under Bill C-21, we will be buying back—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, we are not going to get an answer here.

On robbery with a firearm, the member voted to take away the mandatory minimum and to allow house arrest. Does he regret that vote, given gun violence?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, Bill C-2 addresses the issue of guns that are coming into the country. It is a border bill, and I expect the member to support this bill.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, for discharge with intent, or drive-by shootings, someone can now get house arrest, and there is no mandatory minimum. The minister voted for that. Does he regret that, given gun violence today?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we are investing in the border with \$1.3 billion in investments. That is meant to take guns off our streets.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, the minister is okay with house arrest for people who discharge guns. I will give him one last opportunity to rebut that.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the member is against any form of gun control, yet he talks about the safety of Canadians.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, Randall Hopley, somebody who the Premier of British Columbia, an NDP premier, says should not be let out again, kidnapped a three-year-old. Will the minister enact legislation to ensure that sex offenders such as Randall Hopley can be dealt with and that the public can be safe?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, this is a matter for the Correctional Service of Canada. It was a release by them. It had nothing to do with the decision of the minister.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, it was the decision of the minister not to legislate. We could legislate. This is a long-term offender. Will the minister work with Conservatives to introduce legislation?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the first act of the government was to bring forward legislation, Bill C-2, which would impact many crimes. I am hoping the member—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, will the minister enact legislation that works to keep sex offenders in jail longer?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, it is not up to me to enact legislation. It is up to the House.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, will the minister propose legislation to keep sex offenders in jail longer, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, we have brought forward Bill C-2. It addresses a number of issues around the border. That is a critical priority.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Chair, Bill C-2 is a border bill. We are talking about sex offenders and jail. Will the minister keep them there?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, the member is accurate. It is a border bill, and we look forward to its quick passage.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the Minister of Transport.

If I may, I will give a bit of background. Having gone through the last federal election, as I indicated previously, I want to be very sensitive to what was being said at the doors and amplify what I heard every day of the campaign. It was genuine concern over the issue of President Donald Trump and his threat of tariffs, the impacts on trade, and what we would do in Ottawa to respond to that threat.

I am really grateful. We had elected a leader of the Liberal Party prior to the federal election, who today is the Prime Minister, with an incredible background. I found it interesting that he was appointed to be the governor of the Bank of Canada by Stephen Harper. He was then the governor of the Bank of England and dealt with the Brexit issue. As a Prime Minister, he fully understands how the economy works.

Today, not only do we have him as our Prime Minister, but we have one of the most able-minded individuals in the Minister of Transport, who has a comprehensive understanding of the importance of trade and the impact that it has on Canadians. On election night, it was very gratifying to see the results. I was quite satisfied. It reaffirmed to me and to many others that we have the right Prime Minister and the right government to take on the issues before us.

It was so encouraging that shortly after the election, arrangements were made to meet with the premiers in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It made me reflect on when we talked about building a strong Canada. Back in 1994, Paul Edwards was the leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party. I say that because at the time of the provincial election and leading into it, he talked a great deal about prairie integration or prairie co-operation, believing that the Prairies would be stronger and healthier if they could break down some of the barriers between provincial boundaries.

Over the years, I have heard on many different occasions about interprovincial trade, and it was nice to get a dollar figure put to it. It is a significant amount of money. I truly believe that this crisis situation, the President Trump threat, has unified Canadians. Having been a parliamentarian now for over 35 years, I am convinced that an opportunity has arisen as a direct result of that.

We see that Canadians in different ways have spoken to the issue. They have done that by cancelling trips to the United States, by shopping and looking for made-in-Canada products and by avoiding products that are made in the U.S. They want to make a statement, much as they did on April 28. The statement was not just for the Liberal members of Parliament. It was for all members of Parliament, all political parties. The statement was that it is time we put Canadian interests first and foremost when dealing with this issue, and I believe the first ministers' conference embodied the wishes and desires of what the citizens are saying.

● (2055)

I listened to the Minister of Transport's opening remarks on the issue. She talked about how the provinces are bringing down some of the provincial barriers to accommodate additional trading opportunities. I think back to 1994 when Paul Edwards said that nurses graduating from the University of Saskatchewan, which I believe is located in Saskatoon, should be able to practise throughout the Prairies. I believe Paul Edwards was right back then, and it needs to be amplified because it should not just apply to the prairie

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provinces, as clearly spoken to in the Minister of Transport's comments.

I am a big fan of the Red Seal program. It provides opportunities for Canadians, no matter where they live, to use the skill sets they have acquired through post-secondary education and the practical training they got. Men and women have benefited tremendously from that particular program.

We have an opportunity to look at ways to continue to take down some of those barriers. I like using specific examples. When I think of a labour barrier, I think of an occupation where one partner in a couple has to relocate to another provincial jurisdiction and it ends up dividing the family. Often, it is for a short term, but it might cause one partner to have to give up a career. These are the types of things that I believe we have the opportunity to encourage.

Many things that take place are about provincial barriers. That is why it is not just about what Ottawa needs to do. It is about demonstrating leadership on the issue, bringing people together, building a consensus and taking actions where we can. I believe that under the Prime Minister, we have the right leadership that has the ability to bring people together. All one needs to do is reflect on what took place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Trade matters. It is absolutely critical that we get this thing right.

I often talk about Manitoba's pork industry. It creates 10,000-plus direct jobs, not to mention the indirect jobs. I remember taking a tour at the Maple Leaf plant on Lagimodiere Boulevard in Winnipeg, and it was interesting. As I was watching all this bacon being produced, I was told that half the bacon consumed in Canada was being produced on Lagimodiere. It is really encouraging.

As a government, we have had a two-pronged approach. One is to look at ways we can take down barriers in Canada so that companies, small or big, have more opportunity to maintain and hopefully expand opportunities, creating more jobs. Where we can, we can provide support for those companies so they might be able to look at alternatives, exporting beyond the United States, such as to the Philippines. In December, I was in the Philippines, and we had exploratory trade discussions so we can achieve a trade agreement. These are the types of initiatives that are going to protect the interests of Canadians and at the same time build the economy, a Canada strong economy for all Canadians. That is why we need to take the types of proactive measures that the Prime Minister and this government have taken in a matter of weeks.

● (2100)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: If the hon. member has a question for the minister, he can pose that now.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Chair, could the minister share with us how she perceives trade to be such an important, vital issue for all Canadians?

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Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to start by thanking the member for Winnipeg North. Those of us who know him in this House know how energetic, loquacious and well-informed about everything he is. I have spent time with him in his constituency in Winnipeg, and the high respect with which we hold him here is nothing compared to the love and adoration he has from his constituents. He is there for them, and he is there for us too, so I am—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the compliment, and I thank the minister.

The minister made reference in her opening remarks to one thing that is really important. Could she provide some additional thoughts on how provinces have come to the table with a sense of co-operation about taking down some of those local barriers?

For example, the Province of Ontario has reached an agreement with the Province of Manitoba, and I understand that some provinces have passed legislation to this effect. This is the type of co-operation and consensus that, I believe, amplifies what it is that Canadians want to see: political co-operation on this very important, critical file.

• (2105)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, that is another excellent question. I jest a little, but only a little, because one of the things that is really heartwarming to see in Canada right now is the unity among premiers, Conservative premiers, Liberal premiers and NDP premiers, around the idea of getting rid of trade barriers between us. I hope all members of this House will join the premiers and join our government in supporting that initiative.

I think in asking for that generosity, it behooves me and our government to be generous in turn. Let me offer a few name checks to Conservatives who have led the charge on interprovincial trade: Premier Tim Houston of Nova Scotia, with his mutual recognition approach, is doing a great job; Premier Doug Ford of Ontario, as head of the Council of the Federation, is also leading the charge; and I do want to recognize someone who was a colleague of some of us in this House, the Hon. Jason Kenney, who has been—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Chair, one of the industries referenced a bit earlier was the trucking industry. The trucking industry has literally 10,000-plus jobs in the province of Manitoba. It is a growing industry in the northwest, and in Winnipeg, in particular, where CentrePort Canada is a hub, with the potential to create literally thousands of additional jobs. It is important that we look at ways we can enhance the trucking industry. There is no doubt about that.

The minister made reference to taking down the barriers to allow truckers to travel interprovincially. When I met with a group of truckers, one of the things they said to me is that they would like to see more rest stops. What I would be interested in are things of that nature, the other things we can do to complement and support our trucking industry, if she has any comments about that.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, that is a great idea.

I also want to give a shout-out to the Deputy Minister of Transport, who is organizing a hackathon at the beginning of July for transport ministers and officials from across the country to get those barriers down, so that truckers can drive a truck from one end of the country to the other.

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Chair, Conservatives are committed to eliminating interprovincial trade barriers. My challenge, though, is with what I heard at the doors quite often. I cannot say how many folks I heard from who said they were tired of politicians saying one thing and then doing another.

The Prime Minister, then the Liberal candidate, said on five separate occasions that we would have free trade in Canada by Canada Day. Can the minister confirm that that will be the case?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I will just confirm that the hon. member is splitting his time three ways.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, it will be three ways.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to congratulate my colleague, and I am even going to say friend, from Northumberland—Clarke on his re-election. He has a wonderful family, and I would like to congratulate them too.

Our commitment as a government is to do everything in our power to get free trade in Canada by Canada Day. As the member knows, it is not entirely, not even chiefly, in the power of the federal government, but I am proud of what the—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, my question, again, is, will we have free trade in Canada by Canada Day?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, my commitment is that I am going to do everything in my power to get there as fast as I can.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, will we have all federal barriers eliminated by Canada Day?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, that is an excellent question, and I hope that means the members opposite are going to vote for and support our one Canadian—

• (2110)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, what percentage of total barriers are federal barriers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I actually did not hear an answer to whether the Conservatives will be supporting our bill. I really hope they will.

Federal barriers are a small portion of the barriers, but in saying that, I want to lean on what great work the provinces are doing.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, just to answer the question, we will read the legislation and then find out whether we are going to support it. I think that makes sense. I was actually hoping that we might get draft legislation in advance so that we would not have to be slowed down by amendments or other contributions we may have.

Once again, will all barriers be gone by Canada Day?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I said, we are a minority in this House, as we were reminded earlier this week. It is my commitment as a minister to do everything in my power, in the federal government's power, to remove federal barriers—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, the Prime Minister committed five different times during the campaign to eliminating “all barriers”. These are his words, not mine. I realize there may be some reasons why he cannot, but that is why I never would have made that promise to begin with.

Does the minister think the Prime Minister was being disingenuous when he made the promise that we would have free trade in Canada by Canada Day?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, Canadians are really smart. Canadians know we need one economy, not 13. Canadians know we need free trade in Canada as soon as we can get it. If we all work really hard, and we are going to have to do it together, across the country, provinces, territories, the federal government, the opposition—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, the member mentioned the number \$200 billion. That has been stated by academics to be for the removal of all barriers. It has been stated clearly today that we will not have all barriers gone. What will be the economic impact of the barriers that will be removed by Canada, if any?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, it is a really good point, and I want to be clear. I am going to stop the ritualized jousting and be a normal human. I convened a round table of economists really shortly after being sworn in as minister. We had divergent views. Some said that if we lift all barriers, we get 4% of GDP; others said 1%. Reasonable people can differ, but there is unanimity that this is going to make our economy stronger—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for that, but those numbers were all calculated on the basis of eliminating all barriers. We are not even sure if any barriers will be eliminated by Canada Day.

This was a disingenuous false promise by the Prime Minister. Does the minister think he set her up for failure?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I believe in succeeding or failing based on my own strengths, merits and hard work. I think I will leave it there.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, I think I have just seen two prime ministers in a row set the minister up to fail.

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Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, on interprovincial trade, we are absolutely already making progress, and the progress, I have to say, is—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Chair, since we will have the legislation by, I believe, tomorrow, and I look forward to the technical briefing, will the minister commit to providing all economic analysis of the financial impact and economic impact of the legislation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I have with me a binder of independent analyses done on this, including a study done for the IMF. Truly and sincerely as a human, not a jousting, it is an issue—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk.

[Translation]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Chair, I am very pleased to take part in this evening's discussion. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade on her re-election and her appointment to cabinet in this very important position, particularly given the economic challenges we are facing.

When it comes to the debate on interprovincial measures, let us remember that almost nine years ago to the day, on June 14, 2016, we were debating a motion to “free the beer”. I see the minister remembers that. She will recall that her party voted against our motion, which specifically aimed to allow more transportation and more efforts.

In the throne speech, the King said that we need to “remove all remaining federal barriers to internal trade and labour mobility by Canada Day”. Canada Day is in 25 days. Would she not agree that the goal that the government made the King say a few days ago is far too unattainable?

● (2115)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am delighted that the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk has reminded members of our dear colleague from Central Okanagan's unforgettable slogan, “free the beer”. When I was preparing for tonight, I was planning to find an opportunity to salute him for having undertaken that important initiative. I am very grateful for the work that Conservatives like Jason Kenney did on that important initiative.

Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for paying tribute to my colleague from British Columbia, whom I hold in high esteem, but she did not answer my question.

Canada Day is in 25 days. Is it not totally irresponsible of the government to say that it can be done by Canada Day? Is the government prepared to tell us that the free circulation of Canadian workers, in any profession, will be possible by Canada Day? Yes or no?

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Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, my answer will be based in part on a question that I must put to my colleague on the opposite side of the chamber. Will the Conservatives be voting in favour of this important measure? Yes or no? It is now their—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, nine years ago, we Conservatives were in favour of interprovincial trade, but the Liberals voted against the proposal made by my friend from British Columbia.

I will ask another question. Will a nurse from Quebec be able to work in Newfoundland or British Columbia by Canada Day? Yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as my hon. colleague understands very well, the federal government can only do its part, and it wants to do it. We are a minority in Parliament. We need the support of our colleagues—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, that was not even a hint of the beginnings of an answer.

Will an electrician from Ontario be able to repair electrical boxes in Saskatchewan by Canada Day? Yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak with the Premier of Saskatchewan on Monday. He is one of the premiers who is very supportive of this initiative. We are working—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I do not have an answer yet.

Will a real estate broker from Ontario be able to work in British Columbia by Canada Day? Yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, that is primarily a question for the premiers of Ontario and British Columbia, but I have to—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, the cat is out of the bag now. Unfortunately, we now see the Liberal federal minister passing the buck to the provinces. That is exactly the opposite of what we need.

Will there really be an interprovincial free trade agreement by Canada Day, as the King said?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I have so much respect for my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk. That is why I am surprised that he, a member from Quebec, is the one who is prepared not to—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for one last question.

Gérard Deltell: Mr. Chair, it is exactly the opposite. The minister is the one trying to deflect.

Changing topics, many people in my riding work at the Quebec City airport. Leases are an issue that affects all airports in Canada, because they do not currently own the land. These are short-term leases. Airports want leases to be extended by 50 years when it comes time to negotiate with the companies that set up shop there.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I am aware of this issue. It is an important one. We are currently studying it and working with officials.

[English]

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Chair, in the Confederation discussions, George Brown famously said that going from province to province is like “going to a foreign country.” He said that the Confederation proposal is to “throw down all barriers between the provinces—to make a citizen of one, citizen of the whole”.

Does the minister agree with our founding fathers that we should throw down all provincial trade barriers?

• (2120)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I certainly do.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, when would the minister do this?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I said to our respected colleague from Quebec, I respect the jurisdiction of the provinces and I respect—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for York—Durham.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, at your meeting with the first ministers, did you discuss internal trade barriers?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Please address questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, we surely did.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, did the minister and the premiers draw up a list of internal trade barriers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, we have a list, and the premiers were very vocal about their intention to move with alacrity.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, would the minister provide the House a copy of that list?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, in fact, it is a matter of public record in terms of what the exemptions are for each province and territory in the federal—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for York—Durham.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, I did not ask what the exemptions were. I asked if you would provide a list that you drew up at the first ministers' meeting.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Again, please address questions through the Chair.

Business of Supply

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, the exemptions are a list.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, if a province does not want to remove a barrier voluntarily, will the Liberal government coerce the province to remove it?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I think there is a wave of patriotism in Canada. I think we are ready to trust each other and to work together. It is in that spirit of collaboration that I intend to work.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, the minister spoke about a number of the memorandums of understanding between provinces. For example, the Ontario and New Brunswick MOU says that it is not legally binding.

Does the minister believe that non-binding commitments are enough to create one Canadian economy?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, the member opposite is a newly elected MP for Ontario. Perhaps he and I differ in the degree of trust we have for the Premier of Ontario. I believe he is a man of his word and will live up to it.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, the trust we have in our provincial premiers is not at issue.

The question is, does the minister believe that non-legally binding commitments are enough to create one Canadian economy?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, in fact, I think the member opposite's questions are directly about questioning the sincerity with which the premiers of Ontario and New Brunswick are approaching this issue. I choose to trust them and believe they want to make—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for York—Durham.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, the Canadian Cancer Society said this week, “Cancer is already hard, accessing treatment shouldn't be.”

Does the minister agree?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, if the point of the question is to say that we need to make it easier for health care professionals to work across the country, I agree 1,000%.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, I am glad to hear that. I assume then that the minister believes that the lack of cancer care and access to drugs and treatment is an internal trade barrier.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, no, I did not say that. I chose my words precisely, with care. I do believe that one of the things we need to do is to make it easier for health care professionals, make it seamless for health care professionals—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for York—Durham.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, let me ask the minister directly then.

Does the minister believe that the lack of cancer care access and the lack of access to treatment and to drugs are internal trade barriers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I believe that an internal trade barrier is the fact that health care professionals cannot move freely across the country and cannot offer their services across bor-

ders. That is not good enough, and that is one of the things that we are going to change.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, I agree with labour mobility. That was not the question. The question was regarding patients' access to care and drugs and treatment.

Is that an internal trade barrier?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I actually did address that in my answer. I do believe that part of removing internal barriers to trade is making the movement of goods barrier-free, making the movement of people barrier-free and making it possible to provide services across borders.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, when will cancer patients have access to all types of treatment and drugs in all parts of Canada?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, again, I was clear. Part of the work of removing barriers to interprovincial trade absolutely includes making services frictionless and barrier-free, and allowing them to be provided across the country.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Chair, does the minister know the value of lost wages, out-of-pocket expenses, caused by the lack of access to cancer treatment because of internal trade barriers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, the Conservatives seem confused in their questions. On one hand, they want to say that we are overstating the value of removing internal barriers to trade. On the other hand—

• (2125)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Halifax.

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am honoured to rise today to give my first speech in the House of Commons for the 45th Parliament. I am hugely grateful to my family, friends, colleagues and volunteers for this opportunity.

We heard from Canadians, and they voted for a strong Liberal government to build and strengthen our economy under the leadership of our Prime Minister. It is a privilege to speak today about a vital pillar of Canada's economic future: our ports, the security that protects them and the infrastructure that connects them to the rest of the country and the world.

Business of Supply

Canada's ports are more than just gateways. They are the lifeblood of our supply chains and, most importantly, our economy. Every year, millions of tonnes of goods flow through our ports, supporting industries from manufacturing and agriculture to retail and technology. I had the pleasure of visiting the port of Halifax a couple of weeks ago, getting a tour, and understanding and learning from them about how they can contribute to the challenging times that we are facing here in Canada today.

Ports do not operate in isolation. They rely on a network of infrastructure, like railways, highways and airports, which move goods seamlessly across provinces, territories and borders. Without modern, reliable infrastructure, our ports cannot reach their full potential. Our ports connect Canadian businesses to global markets and bring essential products to Canadian consumers.

Ports across the country, like the port of Delta in B.C., the port of Montreal and, of course, the port of Halifax in my home riding, support hundreds of thousands of jobs, from dock workers and truckers to supply chain managers and exporters. They generate billions of dollars in economic activity, directly contributing to the prosperity of communities coast to coast.

However, our ports face serious challenges. Organized crime, drug smuggling, cyber-threats and aging infrastructure put our supply chains and our economy at risk. Disruptions at major ports ripple across the country, causing delays, raising costs and threatening Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner. Our economic security depends on the security and resilience of our ports.

That is why our government is committed to a comprehensive plan to modernize and secure our ports. Our plan focuses on investing in advanced screening and inspection technologies that allow faster, more accurate checks of cargo; enhancing coordination among law enforcement agencies, border services and port authorities to detect and disrupt illicit activities before they reach Canadian soil; strengthening cybersecurity defences at ports to protect against digital attacks that could cripple trade flows; upgrading port infrastructure to handle larger volumes efficiently while maintaining security standards; and expanding trusted worker programs to ensure that only vetted, reliable personnel have access to sensitive areas.

Supporting and strengthening our ports is the key to strengthening our Canadian economy. That is why our government has committed to creating the new trade diversification corridor fund, a historic investment to build and modernize the trade infrastructure that connects Canada's ports, railways, airports, highways and other key facilities. This fund is about developing economic corridors, strategic routes that can unlock the greatest opportunities for interprovincial and international trade.

We are prioritizing areas where jobs and growth are being held back by infrastructure constraints, making targeted investments to remove bottlenecks and improve capacity. Simply put, reducing disruptions means smoother trade flows, lowering costs for businesses and consumers. We know that investing in stronger security attracts investment by ensuring Canada's ports are reliable and safe. By preventing illegal goods, we protect legitimate industries and Canadian jobs from unfair competition. Investing in modernization and innovation helps our ports and our competitiveness, thus helping Canadian exporters succeed in the global marketplace.

Of course, modern infrastructure is only part of the equation. Our ports must also be secure and resilient to protect supply chains and maintain the confidence of global trading partners. Our comprehensive plan includes investing in advanced inspection technologies, enhancing law enforcement and border agency coordination, strengthening cybersecurity at ports, expanding trusted worker programs and upgrading port infrastructure to handle growing volumes efficiently and safely.

We recognize that port security is a shared responsibility. We are working closely with provincial and municipal governments, port operators, industry partners, unions and international allies to build a system that is both secure and efficient. Together, we will foster a culture of security and resilience that safeguards the backbone of our economy.

● (2130)

In closing, strengthening our ports and port security is not just about protecting infrastructure; it is about protecting Canada's economic future and ensuring Canadian businesses remain competitive. Canadian consumers have access to the goods they need and Canadian workers have secure jobs. Ultimately, strong ports are the backbone of resilient supply chains that can withstand shocks and adapt to growing trade demands. By investing in safer, smarter and stronger ports, we are investing in the prosperity of every Canadian. Investing in Canada's ports is a critical step towards strengthening our national supply chains.

Let us continue working together to keep Canada moving forward.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I will now ask the member for Halifax to ask her first question to the minister.

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Chair, to the minister, why is it important for Canadians to support nation-building projects like transportation infrastructure, and how do these projects help bring us closer together as a country?

Throughout Canada's history, major infrastructure undertakings like the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Trans-Canada Highway and our network of airports and ports have played a vital role in uniting a geographically vast and diverse nation. In today's context, as we face new challenges related to population growth, climate change, economic competitiveness and regional disparities, how can investments in modern transportation infrastructure, like high-speed rail, expanded transit systems, improved highways and integrated ports, serve as the next generation of nation-building efforts?

How do these projects not only improve physical connectivity, but also promote economic inclusivity, social cohesion and a shared sense of national purpose across provinces and territories? How can Canadians, through public engagement and support, help ensure that these transformative projects reflect our collective values and long-term vision for a stronger and more connected Canada?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would like to start by congratulating my colleague from Halifax on her election. Halifax is a wonderful city with a wonderful MP, and I am always very happy to see women elected to this House.

It is so appropriate for the member to be talking about ports and trade corridors. As an MP for Halifax, she knows how important the port is to that fine city. I am really excited about the national trade diversification fund, the \$5-billion fund we committed to in the platform. I am excited about the \$1.5 billion we committed to for a first and last mile trade fund.

This is a moment to build Canada. Transport, transport corridors, ports, railway lines, airports and roads are all essential to that work. I am so excited about rolling up my sleeves, getting down to work and building our country.

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Chair, to the minister, Canada's ports are vital gateways for international trade, serving as crucial links between domestic producers and global markets. Major ports like the port of Halifax in my riding, the port of Vancouver and the port of Montreal handle millions of tonnes of cargo each year, including everything from agricultural products and natural resources to manufactured goods. These ports not only support Canada's export-driven economy, but also act as economic engines in their own right, creating thousands of direct and indirect jobs, attracting investment and driving growth in surrounding communities.

Given their central role in Canada's supply chains and economic infrastructure, how can targeted investments in port infrastructure help strengthen our trade competitiveness, create new employment opportunities and support local and regional economic development?

Additionally, how can improving port capacity, efficiency and connectivity to road, rail and intermodal hubs ensure that Canadian businesses can respond to global demand more effectively, reduce bottlenecks and build more resilient and sustainable supply chains?

• (2135)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, that is another great question. Our ports are quite literally our access to the world. They are so important.

Business of Supply

Just a few weeks ago, I was so pleased to be in Halifax to meet with the great people who run that port and to hear about their ambitious plans to make a wonderful port even better. I was very pleased a few days ago to meet with the leadership of the Port of Vancouver. Their Roberts Bank terminal 2 project is a very important project for our country, and I am very excited, as minister, to be working with them and to be supporting them.

I also want to point again to the very important meeting the Prime Minister held with the premiers of the provinces and territories. An important subject of discussion was building Canada and putting forward major projects in the national interest, which included many projects to build up our ports, to build our roads, to build our trade corridors and to build our railways. This is a time for us to get to work. We need to work hard to make the Canadian economy the strongest economy in the G7 and to diversify at a time when we are facing a real threat from the United States.

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Chair, Canada is one of the largest countries in the world, stretching from the Pacific to the Atlantic and up to the Arctic Ocean. This vast geography provides Canada with access to a wide range of global shipping routes and international markets, giving us a unique advantage in global trade. From the Port of Vancouver facilitating trade with Asia to the Port of Halifax opening access to Europe, and the increasingly strategic importance of Arctic shipping lanes, our ports serve as critical gateways to the world.

Given this unique positioning, how can strong, efficient and modernized ports help ensure that Canada remains well connected to global markets now and into the future? In what ways can investing in advanced port infrastructure, such as expanded capacity, improved technology and better intermodal connections, enhance our competitiveness in international trade, reduce bottlenecks and support the seamless movement of Canadian goods and resources across borders? Additionally, how can better-connected ports help businesses across all regions of the country, not just those near the coasts, take advantage of global trade opportunities? As the global economy becomes increasingly reliant on fast, resilient supply chains, what role do Canada's ports play in supporting the long-term sustainability, security and prosperity of our national economy?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I want to highlight one aspect that my colleague raised, and that is the importance of the north and the importance of Arctic sovereignty.

Business of Supply

I had the privilege today of meeting with the Premier of the Northwest Territories and with two chiefs from the Northwest Territories. Their enthusiasm for building Canada, for building up our sovereignty in the north, was absolutely infectious. There is a lot of excitement right now around projects like the Arctic security corridor, including the Grays Bay road and port project. We need to all join together to get these projects built. I do hope all members of this House will share that enthusiasm that we can feel in the country for rolling up our sleeves and building Canada.

[*Translation*]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

On July 6, 2013, which was 4,352 days ago, 47 people died, 65 buildings were destroyed, a town centre was completely destroyed, and a community was forever scarred by a terrible tragedy. I am talking about the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. Faced with these facts, I am thinking of the victims, their families and the community of Lac-Mégantic this evening. It is with the utmost respect for them that I will be holding the minister accountable this evening.

In 2018, Justin Trudeau promised to build the Lac-Mégantic rail bypass. What was the timeline back then?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to congratulate the member on his election. I look forward to working with him. I really appreciate the serious tone of his question. What happened in Lac-Mégantic was a real tragedy, and I think he would agree with me that this is not an issue that should be politicized. I had a conversation this week with Julie Morin, the mayor—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

• (2140)

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, I also appreciate the minister's tone, but members will understand that I only have five minutes, so I would like short answers to my short questions.

What was the timeline in 2018 when the government promised a rail bypass?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I have not made any promises yet because Minister of Transport is a new role for me, but I want to assure you—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, with all due respect to the minister, I am not talking about a promise made by her. I am talking about the promise made by her former prime minister, Justin Trudeau, in 2018.

Had a timeline been set? What was the cost in 2018?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as the new Minister of Transport, I can make a very serious promise to the people of Lac-Mégantic. This issue is a priority. That is why I have already spoken with the mayor.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, this is the fifth transport minister since 2018. Nothing has been done.

In 2022, my colleague was the finance minister. I would like to know how much was allocated in her budget in 2022.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, today, my responsibility is to answer questions in my capacity as Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, but I want to say that Lac-Mégantic is a priority for me.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, I will refresh the minister's memory. The budget was \$237 million in 2022.

Does she believe that is still sufficient?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: We will do whatever it takes to resolve the situation in Lac-Mégantic.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, with all due respect, the question is simple.

Does she think that a budget of \$237 million is sufficient? Yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I have already made myself very clear. This is a priority for me. I have already spoken with the mayor. We will do everything that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, does the minister agree with me that every day of delay puts the people of Lac-Mégantic at risk?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I am new to the job of Minister of Transport. We are going to resolve the situation. We will do it quickly, but we will do it—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, what is the minister's projected timeline?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, it is a big project. It is an important project. We will complete this project while respecting the community's opinion.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, what I am hearing this evening is that there is no projected timeline and no plan.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, that is not it at all.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, she just confirmed it.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Order. The hon. minister.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I said that we are working on this project. We are going to get it done safely.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Chair, the Liberal government is talking about a high-speed rail project between Quebec City and Toronto. There is also the rail bypass.

Which project is the minister's priority?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I am a mother of three, and each of them is my priority. Just as all three of my children are my priority, both of these projects are my priority.

[*English*]

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Chair, I am honoured to rise in the House to discuss a very important issue today. In the recent election I heard loud and clear from my community, as many MPs did across the country, that interprovincial trade barriers must come down for the sake of our economy and the strength of Canada.

I want to congratulate the new minister on her role as the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade. Certainly, she has a lot of work on her hands. For example, many Canadians may not know, but it is easier to ship to the United States than from province to province. In fact, all these interprovincial trade barriers add 8.3% to the cost of shipping by truck, which really amounts to \$1.6 billion annually. Again, we are in a cost of living crisis in this country with the cost of food, goods and building supplies. A lot of this is as a result of our freight costs.

I would ask the minister if she can commit to harmonizing these trucking costs by Canada Day.

• (2145)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate the member for Kildonan—St. Paul on her re-election. She is lucky to be an MP for Manitoba, because Wab Kinew, the Premier of Manitoba, is one of the leaders of the drive to bring down interprovincial trade barriers.

Trucking is, absolutely, a central issue. I have read the same report, which estimates we can add \$1.6 billion to our economy. It is a priority of mine. I will always respect the provinces and territories. The federal government is going to do everything in our power, with alacrity, to remove our barriers. The Conservatives can help us do that, and so can the Bloc, by voting for our measures. As I said, the deputy minister of transport is organizing a trucking hackathon—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Raquel Dancho: Mr. Chair, of course, though, the minister has a real leadership role here. The trucking industry itself and trucking businesses in my community are asking and expecting, based on the promises made by the Liberals in the last election, the Prime Minister himself and the minister, that there will be serious leadership and results by Canada Day. Those are the promises that were made by the Liberal Prime Minister.

One example is daylight shipping restrictions. For safety reasons with certain shipments, they can only be shipped across Canada during the day. The problem is that the definition is not streamlined across the country; each province has a different definition of what constitutes daylight driving hours.

What has the minister done to show leadership to streamline and harmonize the definition of daylight shipping hours?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I love this question because trucking is an obsession of mine, so here is what I have done and

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am doing. One, I have spoken to the Committee on Internal Trade and said, “Let’s make trucking a priority.” Two, I have worked with our fine deputy minister of transport to organize a hackathon, a meeting of everyone in charge of trucking in Canada at the beginning of July, to bring down all the barriers.

Just today, I met with the Northwest Territories minister responsible for internal trade, who is leading the CIT, and we talked about how we need to get trucking done.

What I will say is that in my time in government, I—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Raquel Dancho: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the response, but the problem is that I do have a difficult time having confidence in it.

About 10 years ago, in September 2016, the Department of Transport, the department the minister is responsible for, had a partnership with provinces to put together a task force that made quite an extensive report on this very issue, “Supporting the Efficient Movement of Trucks Across Canada”, which made recommendations on the very topics we are discussing today. That was nearly 10 years ago. Of course, the Liberal government has been in power that entire time and has had the report in the department. I am sure the minister’s officials are very familiar with it.

This causes an issue of confidence. What the Liberals have said sounds really great, and they have made very strong promises, but they have had all the information and the opportunity to show leadership on this for a decade.

I would like to hear a guarantee that the minister will live up to the Prime Minister’s promise that we will have the harmonized trucking regulations by July 1.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, of course it was the great Marc Garneau who was transport minister in 2016, and I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him again.

I am totally committed to getting the job done, and trucking is very high on my priority list. We are working with the provinces and territories, and they are working so quickly. I am grateful for their partnership. I hope tonight’s debate will encourage them to work even faster.

[*Translation*]

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Chair, I am pleased to see the minister again and to speak with her. Tonight, we will be discussing the third link between Quebec City and Lévis.

Could the minister tell me why 70% of residents of the greater Quebec City area and 83% of residents on Quebec City’s south shore are calling for a third link?

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Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would first like to greet the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis and congratulate her on her election. It is a pleasure for me to be back in the House with her.

The issue of the third link is obviously important, especially for Quebec City. It is an issue that I have often discussed with—

• (2150)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis.

Dominique Vien: Mr. Chair, has the minister been in contact with Quebec's minister of transport and sustainable mobility, Ms. Guilbault, who has reiterated her intention to build the third link?

Has the minister spoken to her? Has she had any contact with her?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, the member is right. Obviously, I have good relationships with all the provincial and territorial ministers, including the Quebec ministers. I also want to acknowledge the important role that Premier Legault played on Monday at the meeting of provincial and territorial ministers, which was a marathon session dealing with—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dominique Vien: Mr. Chair, we are talking about the third link. Is the minister in favour of building a third link, as the Quebec government and the people of Quebec have been calling for, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as the Prime Minister has said, we are in the process of building Canada. We are preparing a bill that will enable us to build Canada together.

Dominique Vien: Mr. Chair, I look forward to hearing the beginning of an answer. In February, the current Prime Minister of Canada described the idea of a third link as interesting, particularly in the context of economic tensions with the United States. Does the minister agree with him, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I said, we are in the process of building Canada. We are creating the legal foundation that will allow us to do that. I hope that members who also want to build Canada will—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dominique Vien: Mr. Chair, will she recommend funding the third link between Quebec City and Lévis, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as the Prime Minister said, today we are talking about laws. We are talking about conditions that will allow us to—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dominique Vien: Mr. Chair, earlier, the minister was worried about whether truckers would be able to cross interprovincial borders. Personally, I am only going to worry about whether they can cross the St. Lawrence. Does the minister know where heavy traffic has to go to cross the river in Quebec City?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I hope that the truckers of Quebec and Canada will listen to the discussion and debate in the House.

I am pleased to know that we are all so worried about truckers. On this issue—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dominique Vien: Mr. Chair, I will answer the question. They have to cross the Pierre Laporte Bridge because the Quebec Bridge cannot handle heavy vehicles. The minister should know that now that she is the owner of the Quebec Bridge. Does she know where heavy trucks go if the Pierre Laporte Bridge has to be closed?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I said, it is important to us to collaborate and respect the provinces. We respect the jurisdiction of every province, including Quebec—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dominique Vien: Mr. Chair, the answer is the Laviolette Bridge in Trois-Rivières.

Does the minister know how many extra kilometres and hours that is for truck drivers and the companies that hire them?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I am so glad we all agree on one thing, which is that truck drivers are important.

Dominique Vien: Mr. Chair, it is 140 kilometres there and 140 kilometres back. That is an hour and a half each way, which adds up to an additional three hours.

In 2016 and 2017, 94% of the 800 incidents that occurred in and around the Pierre Laporte Bridge caused the bridge to close. Does the minister know how many days those interruptions added up to?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, what I know is that we must build Canada and Quebec. We will do so in close co-operation with the province and, I hope, with the co-operation of the members from Quebec.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the minister for joining us today. I am pleased that she is willing to participate in this exercise. I hope it will be positive and constructive as well as informative for those who are listening.

First, I would like to mention that I will be sharing five minutes of my time with the member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj.

On January 10, the government announced that it would eventually run out of funds for the incentives for zero-emission vehicles program. That was on a Friday, and 48 hours later, on Monday, January 13, suddenly there was no more money in the incentives for zero-emission vehicles program.

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Unfortunately, when we looked at the appropriations that the government announced for government operations and submitted to the House for approval, we did not see any additional funds allocated for this program. Does the minister know how many car dealers in Quebec have been affected by this situation? Does she know what costs dealerships have had to absorb by granting rebates on vehicles in good faith when they failed to receive the money from the government afterwards?

• (2155)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank the hon. member for his question and for the letter that he sent me on this issue.

I recognize the importance of this issue. We are working with small and medium-sized businesses. I want to assure the member and SMEs that the government will be there for them. I cannot provide all of the details today, but I do want to assure everyone who has participated in this program that we will be there for them.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for her beginning of an answer. In Canada, dealers have lost \$11 million. They paid rebates out of their own pockets.

I think that selling electric cars is a good thing. We know that there were availability issues, and we know that there was also some resistance in the industry. I believe that it is a very positive development that dealers decided to join in the effort to electrify and decarbonize our transportation industry. I think that the least that the government can do is to then support them. There was a program in place in the past. Dealers in Canada had to absorb an \$11-million loss because the government was unable to honour its promises.

In Quebec, we are talking about 80%, or roughly \$9 million. Is the government committed to reimbursing this money?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, the answer is yes.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, I like that answer. What remains to be seen is how soon we can expect to see the money. Will it come from existing funds? Will we see it in a future budget or perhaps even sooner?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I have been the Minister of Transport for only a few weeks, but I want to reassure the member opposite that the issue he raises is really important. This is something we have talked about in the department. Right now, we are finalizing our plan. We understand that we have a responsibility to small and medium-sized businesses. We will be there for them.

This evening, I am not allowed to confirm exactly how we are going to do that, but I can assure everyone and all members of the House that we are going to resolve this situation.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, if the government intends to resolve the situation, that means we can expect the \$9 million to be refunded to SMEs in Quebec and the \$11 million to be refunded to SMEs in Canada.

However, can we also expect the return of the much-touted subsidy for zero-emission vehicles in general, beyond the money that was owed?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, those are different issues. I believe that my first responsibility is to resolve the situation and reimburse those who are entitled to be reimbursed. I want to assure everyone here tonight that we will do that. We are now finalizing the plan to do so.

As for the plan going forward, that is obviously a question for me, the Minister of Transport, but it is also a question for the Prime Minister. It is a question that concerns future financial plans. However, I believe that it is really useful and important to hear from the members and to determine whether there is support in the House for such a program. Perhaps this means that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of a budget that includes something like that.

• (2200)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, we will have to look at the entire budget to see whether we will indeed vote in favour of it. It would be helpful if there were positive measures for electrification.

Let us talk about electrification. The government made many promises during the election. Right now, we see that one of the Prime Minister's priorities is to meet with oil and gas companies and to try to ensure that new pipelines are built. However, we see that there is no firm commitment to the electrification of transportation.

Is the government still committed to electrifying and decarbonizing transportation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, in connection with projects of national significance, we certainly are. We have already talked about high-speed rail. That is a very important project. It will decarbonize Canada. It will increase our GDP by 1.1%, which is a \$35-billion increase. It is a truly ambitious project that our government strongly supports. I have to say that one of the reasons I am so pleased to be the Minister of Transport is—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, time is flying, and there is another topic I would like to discuss.

The minister must be familiar with Via Rail. Since October 11, 2024, its trains have been forced to slow down because of a dispute with Canadian National, or CN. Last December, the government asked CN to produce documents to justify its decision. Litigation made its way to the Superior Court. On April 23, the Superior Court ruling essentially said that it is not up to the court to rule on the matter. Rather, it is up to Transport Canada and the minister, who has all the powers to do so.

Will the government resolve this situation soon?

Business of Supply

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I have already raised that issue with all parties concerned. Via Rail is a very important carrier for Canadians.

I have been the minister for just a few weeks, but we are working with everyone involved in this issue to resolve it.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, this situation has been going on since October 2024. We are in June, which means it has been more than six months, even eight months.

In the meantime, Via Rail is losing customers and keeps experiencing delays. It is a Crown corporation that falls directly under the government's authority.

Is the future of this Crown corporation important to the minister? If so, why is it taking so long to resolve the problem?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I agree that this is an important issue, but I must insist on the fact that I am a new Minister of Transport. My colleague is talking about October 2024, but, as he knows full well, I made decisions between October and now that did not allow me to make decisions within the government.

However, today, as Minister of Transport, it is true that this is a very important issue to me. We have worked within the departments. We have worked with the key players. We will resolve the problem.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, how much longer are we going to wait before a decision is made? It has already been too long, in my opinion.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, we will move quickly on this issue because we understand how important it is to Canadians and to travellers.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, the Canada Gazette has published new regulations for travellers' rights.

Can we expect these regulations to be implemented by the current government?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, travellers' rights are very important to us.

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj, BQ): Mr. Chair, regional routes are central to Via Rail's mandate. This year, according to the estimates tabled, the federal government will provide \$383 million, which includes funding for regional passenger rail service.

In my region, the Gaspé Peninsula, rail service was halted in 2013 because the line was in such poor condition. In a few weeks, however, the rail line will be completely restored and safe between Matapédia and Port-Daniel.

Nearly 20,000 Gaspé Peninsula residents have signed a petition calling for rail service to resume. A motion adopted unanimously in the Quebec National Assembly calls for passenger rail service to be restored on the Gaspé Peninsula. This week, the Gaspé RCM wardens' table adopted a resolution asking for the same thing. In short, people want the train on the Gaspé Peninsula as soon as possible.

Does the minister agree with me that Via Rail must restore passenger rail service to Port-Daniel as soon as the line is operational?

• (2205)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would first like to congratulate the member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj.

I would also like to thank my dear colleague Diane Lebouthillier for her hard work on behalf of Canadians and the people of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. She was the one who first brought this issue to my attention. I know this is a very important issue for the people of Gaspé, so I thank the member for his question.

As we know, Via Rail is an independent company with its own management. We work closely with the people at Via Rail, and I will certainly discuss this issue with them. I will also work closely with the municipalities and the province of Quebec. I understand the importance of this issue. I understand the importance of Gaspé, of a connection and of safe transportation.

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Chair, does the minister agree that regional connections are at the heart of Via Rail's mandate?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as Minister of Transport, I recognize the importance of a respectful working relationship with Via Rail. Via Rail has its own management. We respect that.

I also want to note that it is very important now more than ever to ensure a rail service that is accessible to all Canadians, including in the regions.

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Chair, can the minister intervene and have Via Rail start the process to resume rail service between Matapédia and Port Daniel—Gascons?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I believe I have already answered the question. I understand the importance of this issue and I am looking at it closely. Canada is a country governed by the rule of law, one that respects its institutions. It is important to respect—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj.

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Chair, Via Rail is funded by the federal government to provide regional rail service. The rail line will be operational in the coming weeks.

Does the minister agree with me that, under the circumstances, Via Rail should resume service to Port-Daniel—Gascons?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I understand the question perfectly. I am new to the role of Minister of Transport. I am familiar with this issue, and I know that it is important. We will work on this file with Via Rail. It is also important to keep in mind that Via Rail has management that works with me—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj has 40 seconds.

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Chair, the runway at the Magdalen Islands airport is too short, impeding our ability to send cargo by air.

Can we work together to extend the runway at the Magdalen Islands airport to create a better economy?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his question. This is another issue that I am very familiar with. I agree that we need to work on this issue with the municipality, residents and departmental officials.

[*English*]

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Chair, in the opinion of the minister, have the air passenger protection regulations been a success or a failure?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is after 10 o'clock at night, but I hope you will permit me, in response to the question from the member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, to congratulate him on his “Free the Beer” campaign. Truly, it was ahead of its time. Now is a moment, and I think—

• (2210)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, it is very kind what the minister said. However, getting back to the air passenger protection regulations, were they a success or a failure?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I have been Minister of Transport for just a few weeks, and I am not today going—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, is it the opinion of the minister that the Canadian Transportation Agency is doing a good job?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Again, Mr. Chair, I am not going to begin my time as transport minister by condemning those agencies under my care, but what I think—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, on a scale of one to 10, how satisfied is the minister with the CTA's independent regulatory and dispute resolution processes for transportation providers and users?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, let me just say that I am familiar with concerns that passengers have, and my priority is to ensure that Canadians travelling in Canada have a great travel experience and that when they—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, is that a five?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, when I was in school, I always respected most the teachers who graded me after having a chance to—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, according to the CTA's 2023-24 departmental results report, “the Agency completely redesigned and implemented a new streamlined complaints process”. Has this new process improved or worsened?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, continuing my teacher analogy, a good teacher gives students time to do their homework and to present their work. Having said that, I think I understand

Business of Supply

where the member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna is going with these questions, and I want to say to him that passengers come first with me and I am going—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, teachers give grades, so I would like to know this: What is the minister's response to the CTA's backlog of approximately 80,000 claims?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I said, and I think I have been very clear, passengers come first with me. I think Canadians need to know that when they travel, they will be treated—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, let me rephrase it. Is an 18-month waiting period for complaint resolution acceptable to the minister, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, Canadians not being treated well when they travel and not having access to quick results when there are problems is, obviously, unacceptable to me. I would hope it is unacceptable to everyone in this House.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, is the minister aware that in 2023, the CTA exceeded its planned staffing of 186 full-time equivalents, ended up with 287 and has such a huge backlog?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I have said a few times already tonight, ensuring that Canadian passengers are treated well is a priority with me. I believe I am a fair teacher, but I am also a tough grader, and I will ensure they are treated well.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, the CTA planned to spend \$22.5 million in 2023 but spent \$38.5 million. Is it the opinion of the minister that this is proper financial management, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Again, Mr. Chair, I am going to talk about my plans, my work as transport and internal trade minister, and I can be unequivocal. Passengers will always come first with me. It is important they be treated—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, I am thrilled that the minister wants to talk of her work. Does the minister support or oppose Canadian airlines' use of non-disclosure agreements when resolving complaints?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I am really grateful for the question, because it is an issue that I am aware of. It is an issue I have asked my team to look into, and my team has spoken directly with the passenger rights advocates. It is an issue I have raised with our fine deputy minister—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, if the minister does not support NDAs and is concerned, when will she act on it? Can she give us a date?

Business of Supply

• (2215)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I think we are all familiar with the saying “measure twice, cut once”. This is an important issue. It is an issue that I am seized with and where—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, is the minister aware that airlines can challenge the CTA decisions by suing passengers in a federal court?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I have said quite clearly, it is an issue that I am seized with. It is an issue that my team and I have begun to work on. I do believe that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, I would like a simple yes or no. Is the minister aware that a passenger can be sued by an airline in Federal Court?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I think I have actually been very clear in response to a rather tendentious line of questioning. My answer is that we need to take care of passengers. I am looking into the processes and mechanisms that exist. The—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, I just want to know if the minister finds it acceptable that when someone avails themselves of the CTA, they may end up in Federal Court.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I said, I was aware of the mechanism that existed when I became minister. I am aware of the complaints and concerns passengers have. It is something I am seized with. It is something that I intend to act on, but I will—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, a Kelowna couple was taken to Federal Court after winning their CTA claim. Did the CTA or the government provide them or any other similar case with legal representation in Federal Court, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Again, Mr. Chair, I am speaking as transport minister in a new government. This is an issue I am aware of. I am aware of the concerns of passenger rights groups and the concerns of passengers. I take those concerns very seriously—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Maybe I will just put a bow on this one, Mr. Chair.

Does the minister think it is fair for an airline to sue a passenger for trying to seek redress through the CTA?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I believe, as I am sure all members of this House do, that passengers have to have a clear and effective way to settle their concerns when they have been treated badly. I am aware that many passengers—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: I have been trying to ask very reasonable questions, Mr. Chair. Most Canadians would be able to say whether a process is fair or not, but let us move on.

Does the minister believe that Canada should have one national economy, not 13?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I am going to answer that question with a question. Will the member from Central Okanagan

support the movement he so cleverly launched and vote in favour of our legislation, which will free the beer and do lots of other—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, has the minister presented said legislation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I would say to the member from Central Okanagan to watch this space.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, I will eagerly look to read the said bill, and then we can have a debate.

Is the time for acting on making one national economy now?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Again, Mr. Chair, I cannot resist offering a question in return, and that question to all members on the opposition benches is this: Will they support this essential legislation? I am prepared to—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, I spoke with Simon Rizzardo, whose business is Emcon Services, a Canadian road maintenance company that works in B.C., Alberta and Ontario. It struggles with the incompatible provincial transport regulations that prevent equipment movement among provinces. Has the minister heard of Emcon?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I wonder if the member from Central Okanagan was listening to me earlier tonight. I spoke about how central transport and trucking are to our interprovincial trade barrier lifting work. I talked about the hackathon we are going to have. Maybe the member from Central Okanagan—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member, for a very brief final question.

Dan Albas: Mr. Chair, I just asked if the minister had heard of Emcon. Its plow trucks approved in Ontario cannot be used in B.C., its trailers cannot cross into Manitoba and it gets ticketed for equipment meant for provincial contracts. It even faces conflicting rules about plow truck wings—

• (2220)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. minister, briefly.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, barriers to interprovincial trade and barriers to interprovincial trucking do not make sense. That is why we are working hard to get rid of them.

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Chair, I would like to again congratulate all members of the House for joining the 45th Parliament.

I have some questions for the Minister of Transport. Can the minister tell Canadians how much investment has fled Canada since the production cap on oil and gas was announced?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am here to answer questions about internal trade and transport, but since this is a question about the energy sector, I am going to allow myself to mention one project that I am very proud of and that I think all members of this House should be proud of. It is called TMX. During debate on the 2024 budget, I stood in this House and congratulated the skilled tradesmen who made the golden weld that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

David Bexte: Mr. Chair, this is a transport project. Quite obviously, everything related to the oil and gas industry is involved in transport. Investment has fled the country because of the production cap on oil and gas, so transportation is not happening.

Does the minister know how much investment has fled the country?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I said, I am here to answer transport questions and internal trade questions, but I will allow myself to talk about TMX. It is a nation-building project. I am proud to have been the minister who was on the job when we got that project done. That is already delivering. It has reduced the differential between Canadian oil and U.S. oil. Premier—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

David Bexte: Mr. Chair, the TMX was four or five times the cost of the original private enterprise, but be that as it may, I will move on a bit.

Can the minister tell Canadians if any other G7 country has imposed a cap on its own internal or external energy production, or is the Liberal government uniquely short-sighted?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, again, it is a bit rich to hear Conservatives criticize the building of a pipeline. We got it built. The previous Conservative government did not. I am very proud of that pipeline. It is diversifying the Canadian economy today. It is giving us an alternative to the U.S. It is a nation-building project, and it is operating right now. It is making—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

David Bexte: Mr. Chair, it has nothing to do with building a pipeline for four times the original cost. It has everything to do with the projects that were stalled and that did not happen because of the actions of the Liberal government.

Again, can the minister tell us if there is any other G7 country that has this kind of an internal cap on production?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, given the lateness of the hour, and given the importance of TMX, I humoured the members of the House by talking about that. The fact is, I am Minister of Transport and Internal Trade. I—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Business of Supply

David Bexte: Mr. Chair, in the interest of transporting more product from the production of oil fields in Alberta, Saskatchewan, B.C. and everywhere else, when will the Liberal government scrap the job-killing oil and gas production cap?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I think I have been very clear. I think the mandate of this debate is very clear. We have been here for nearly four hours, and it actually has been great to hear some really good questions and give answers to them. I would be delighted to answer transport questions.

David Bexte: Mr. Chair, let us move on a bit.

How much money has Canada lost because of the Liberal government's tanker ban on the west coast?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, again, we are here to talk about transport and internal trade-related issues. I am delighted to answer questions about those. I do—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

David Bexte: Mr. Chair, this is intimate to transport. The ban is on Canadian territorial waters, internal waters on the west coast. This has impacted the economic circumstance of Canada.

How much money has the country lost because we do not allow tankers on the northwest coast?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, we just had an election. We have an opportunity today, all of us, to come together to build Canada and to say, yes, a few weeks ago we were knocking on doors and competing, but right now, our job—

● (2225)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

David Bexte: Mr. Chair, we just had an election, but we had a decade of the government being involved in this sort of thing. I will move on to the next question.

Why is it okay for tankers to bring oil into the east coast?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, as I said, now really can be, and it must be, a time to not be fighting with each other, but to work together to build Canada—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

I would just inform the committee there are five minutes remaining.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, I will share my five minutes with the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni. I apologize to the ministers I would like to talk to more, but we have to go fast.

Business of Supply

To the hon. Minister of Public Safety, there has been a commitment to hire 1,000 more RCMP officers. Given it has been two years since the Mass Casualty Commission recommended that the minimum training for RCMP officers go to three years, is the government prepared to do that?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, we will be hiring 1,000 RCMP officers, as well as 1,000 CBSA officers. We are trying to recruit the best and the brightest. We will be training them with the adequate resources to be able to serve in this modern environment, and we will be deploying them across Canada.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, unfortunately, it sounds like the answer is no. Please read the mass casualty report.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I thank the member.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, will the hon. Minister of Transport commit to bringing back Bill C-33 on rail safety and ports that was at report stage when it died on the Order Paper?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will commit to having a great conversation with the member opposite about that issue.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, my Bloc Québécois colleague raised the issue about the long delays on VIA tracks, because the Venture trains are being held up by the risk-averse CN. Will the minister intervene and ensure Via Rail does not go broke?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I have already spoken to that issue at some length tonight. It is an important issue. It is worthy of being raised. It is something I am seized with. It is something we are working on.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, the minister mentioned Roberts Bank. I want to draw to her attention, if she is unaware, to the fact that scientists have urged the government to say no as it will lead to the extinction of species.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Chair, I have a huge amount of respect for the member opposite and I take her points very seriously. I also believe that now is the moment when we need to build Canada, we need to build our economy and we need to have access to export markets.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Chair, it is the fifth anniversary of the tragic killing of Chantel Moore who was killed at the hands of police in Edmundston, New Brunswick during a wellness check. Her mother Martha Martin has been advocating that police not do wellness checks. She has met with the minister. My heart goes out to her and her whole family. Has the minister taken any action on any of the recommendations that have been made?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, let me acknowledge that I met with Martha on a number of occasions, including in New Brunswick. I look forward to working with her and addressing some of the concerns she has brought forward.

Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, I talked to the minister this week about the cuts to guards in Ahousaht. They have been reinstated. I want to thank him for doing that. However, the guards in Tofino have not been reinstated.

Now Tla-o-qui-aht elected Chief Elmer Frank has cited that obviously they are Nuu-chah-nulth and they have declared a state of emergency for the safety of their members and communities. They are asking why cuts would happen, especially during a state of emergency in their remote communities.

Also, the Mayor of Tofino has highlighted that it has not had an increase in policing since 2005. Tofino covers Opitsaht, Esowista and Ty-Histanis, and also helps with Ahousaht, with zero indigenous police funding. It does not have guards to cover the cells. It has a population of over 12,000 visitors a day during the summer. Now it has several periods with zero coverage. Is the minister going to address this?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, given that it has been three weeks since I was appointed to this portfolio, there are a number of issues that I will be addressing. I look forward to sitting down and meeting my friend opposite. I know we have worked together on a range of issues over the years and I look forward to the conversation. Ideally, we will be able to work together.

• (2230)

Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, there is still no IIO representing the BIPOC community despite the fact that its members are disproportionately killed at the hands of police. Is the minister going to address that?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Chair, I look forward to engaging with this member on further details with respect to the issue.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: It being 10:30 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27, it is my duty to end the proceedings. The debate in committee of the whole will continue on the next designated day. The committee will rise and I will now leave the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:33 p.m.)

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