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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 19, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports: the report of the Canadian delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly respecting its participation at the 31st annual session in Bucharest, Romania, from June 29 to July 3, 2024; and the report of the Canadian delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly respecting its participation at the 22nd autumn meeting in Dublin, Ireland, from October 2 to 4, 2024.

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the true honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports: the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the joint meeting of the Defence and Security Committee, the Economics and Security Committee and the Political Committee in Brussels, Belgium, from February 19 to 21, 2024; and the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations in New York, New York, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America, from April 22 to 26, 2024.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Health entitled “Saving More Lives: Improving Guidance, Increasing Access and Achieving Better Outcomes in Breast Cancer Screening”.

[English]

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

* * *

• (1005)

PROMOTION OF SAFETY IN THE DIGITAL AGE ACT

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-216, An Act to enact the Protection of Minors in the Digital Age Act and to amend two Acts.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to introduce a bill that would protect Canadians online while safeguarding their civil liberties. The bill proposes a tightly scoped legislative duty of care for online operators as it pertains to children's online safety, would strengthen mandatory reporting requirements for online child sexual abuse material by Internet providers, would update existing laws to criminalize the non-consensual distribution of intimate images to include deepnudes and would modernize existing laws to provide more protections for victims of online criminal harassment. It avoids the creation and use of ubiquitous and overbroad mechanisms that would impinge on Canadian civil liberties.

The bill is a non-partisan plea for the government and all colleagues in this place to abandon previously proposed flawed approaches to this issue and to pass smart measures to protect kids online.

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

* * *

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-217, An Act to amend the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act and the Income Tax Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the post-secondary education financial assistance for persons with disabilities act. I wish to thank the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni for seconding this important piece of legislation.

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The bill would provide tuition-free post-secondary education for all Canadians living with disabilities. This is not only fundamentally just; it is an investment in the potential of our citizens. When we remove barriers to education, we unlock talent, drive innovation and strengthen our communities. While there has been progress in broadening inclusion for students in Canadian colleges, universities and trade schools, there is still much more to be done.

I call on all parliamentarians to support this vital initiative. Let us work together to ensure that every Canadian has the opportunity to learn, grow and contribute fully to our society, because when people with diverse abilities succeed, we all succeed.

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

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

CLIMATE COMMITMENTS

Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by Canadians who want to draw the House's attention to the following issue. The petition states: Whereas our economic and financial systems depend on a stable climate and the Bank of Canada recognizes that climate change poses significant risks to the financial system and the economy and whereas continued financial support for emissions-intensive activities increases future climate-related risks to the stability of financial systems and the long-term interests of Canadians, we, the undersigned, citizens and residents of Canada, call upon the Government of Canada to enact the principal concepts of the climate-aligned finance act, which would establish a duty for directors and officers of federal financial institutions to align with climate commitments; align purposes of Crown corporations and departments, including market oversight by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, with climate commitments; and require the development of action plans, targets and progress reports on meeting climate commitments through annual reporting requirements.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak virtually this morning.

[English]

I am honoured to present a petition that was initially sponsored by former member of Parliament Mike Morrice. The petitioners in the Kitchener-Waterloo region note that they have been promised for more than a decade a daily two-way GO train service between Kitchener and Toronto. This promise has not been realized.

The petitioners are asking the federal government and this Parliament to work with the Government of Ontario to hold Ontario's provincial transit agency to account and deliver on its commitments, and assess the use of federal funding to make such a service available as quickly as possible. It is essential, as the petitioners point out. It is not just a matter of convenience to take a daily two-way train from Kitchener to Toronto. It has an impact on employment and it has a direct impact on access to health care services. It

also, of course, impacts climate commitments to provide reliable public transit.

The petitioners ask for the federal government to initiate a comprehensive project completion timeline for the province; report on the results of the assessment, as the federal government has already contributed substantially to the project; and work with the municipal and regional leaders to report to the public a reasonable timeline for completion.

● (1010)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present a petition on behalf of petitioners from my riding calling on the government to reject recommendations 429 and 430 of the House of Commons finance committee's pre-budget report, refrain from including these recommendations in the federal budget or any related legislation, and affirm the charitable status of faith-based organizations whose work flows from sincerely held beliefs and whose contributions serve the common good in Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED MISLEADING MINISTER TESTIMONY IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the questions of privilege raised on June 11 by the member for Mirabel and on June 13 by the member for Lakeland concerning allegedly misleading statements made in committee of the whole.

The issues they brought forward relate to answers provided by the Minister of Finance and National Revenue during a meeting of the committee of the whole considering estimates on June 10 and by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources on June 11, respectively.

[Translation]

As both questions pertain to answers provided by ministers during their questioning on estimates, they have been grouped for the purpose of rendering a decision.

In his intervention, the member for Mirabel alleged that the Minister of Finance and National Revenue intentionally misled the House by affirming in a response to a question that the Canada carbon rebate, issued as part of the federal carbon pollution pricing proceeds program during the election, was paid from funds collected by the program. He argued that the minister stated this, knowing that the timing of the Prime Minister's announcement to suspend the consumer portion of the program, and the issuing of the rebate weeks later during the election campaign, suggests that a different source was used to fund the rebate.

The Minister of Finance and National Revenue defended his response, denying having misled the House. According to the minister, he had responded in the negative to a question making an allusion to the buying of votes, not about the timing for the collection of funds.

[English]

For her part, the member for Lakeland contended that the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources had misled the House in denying that politicians would be empowered to select specific projects of national interest under Bill C-5, an act to enact the free trade and labour mobility in Canada act and the building Canada act. According to the member, several provisions of the bill seem to contradict the minister's responses, a text that he ought to have known. The member argued that the criteria used to determine whether a statement was deliberately misleading was met and that this situation amounted to contempt. Quoting from a ruling made by Speaker Rota on July 22, 2020, she ended her intervention by explaining the difficulties relating to questions of privilege arising in committees of the whole, due to their usual format as single-event bodies, which complicates the raising of such questions.

In response to this second question of privilege, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader provided a different interpretation of the exchange. He stated that the format of the committee of the whole is not designed to receive informed and contextualized answers. He argued that in no way did the minister deliberately mislead the House in responding to the member. The selection process in identifying projects will involve various consultations and will involve engagement with diverse groups. He apologized on behalf of the government for any confusion the debate may have caused.

• (1015)

[Translation]

As this is my first ruling on a question of privilege, and for the benefit of the members newly elected to this place, I will ask for their indulgence in reiterating and explaining some key concepts.

The Chair would like to first address what may seem to some as a technical element, namely, that the statements in question were made during proceedings in committee of the whole.

When the House resolves itself into a committee of the whole, it is, for all intents and purposes, functioning as a committee to consider a matter the House has referred to it. In this regard, the practice for raising questions of privilege emanating from a committee of the whole is the same as that of a standing, special or legislative

Speaker's Ruling

committee. As stated in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 157:

The Speaker will entertain a question of privilege in regard to a matter that occurred in a Committee of the Whole only if the matter has been dealt with first in the Committee of the Whole and reported accordingly to the House.

[English]

It also says, at pages 933 and 934:

The Chair [of the committee of the whole] has no authority to rule that a breach of privilege has occurred. The Chair hears the question of privilege and may receive and put a motion that certain events which occurred in the Committee should be reported to the House. If the Committee decides that the matter should be reported, then the Chair rises, the Speaker takes the Chair, and the Chair of the Committee reports the question of privilege. The Speaker then deals with the matter. If a *prima facie* case of privilege is found by the Speaker, a Member may move a motion dealing with the matter.

In his July 22, 2020, ruling, found on pages 2701 and 2702 of the Debates, to which the member for Lakeland briefly referred in her intervention, Speaker Rota acknowledged the challenge surrounding the committee of the whole format. He also highlighted the particular nature of the situation he had been asked to adjudicate. A chronological review of events shows that this specific question of privilege had been first raised in committee of the whole and taken under advisement by the Speaker, who was also chairing the committee. It is also worth mentioning that an order of the House was limiting the committee's ability to consider and report on questions of privilege. These exceptional circumstances had led to Speaker Rota's decision to rule on the matter, even though no report had been presented by the committee of the whole.

[Translation]

The Chair recognizes that there may sometimes be challenges with the committee of the whole format, in particular during the consideration of estimates. They, however, do not exempt members of their obligation to raise their concerns there first. The two cases presented last week by the members for Mirabel and Lakeland are no exception to this rule and are not akin to the 2020 precedent.

That being said, the Chair nonetheless reviewed whether the specifics of the two present questions of privilege would warrant a deviation from our normal practice and considered the points raised by the members on their merits before discarding them on technical grounds.

Accusing a member of having misled the House is quite serious as it may touch on their integrity. The threshold for determining if it constitutes a *prima facie* question of privilege is therefore very high. There must be little or no doubt left as to the validity of the claim made.

The members for Mirabel and Lakeland rightfully referred to three criteria the Chair assesses when dealing with such allegations, namely, whether the statement is in fact misleading, whether the member making the statement knew it to be incorrect and, in making the statement, whether the member intended to mislead the House.

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• (1020)

[English]

Disagreements over facts, or how they are presented, are not uncommon in our proceedings, and members often believe that responses they receive from the government either are not correct or contradict other information they have. However, a perception of incorrect statements is not equal to a clear and deliberate intention to mislead the House.

As Speaker Regan indicated on May 18, 2017, at page 11389 of the Debates:

As members will know, the exchange of information in this place is constantly subject to varying and, yes, contradictory views and perceptions. This, of course, heightens the risk that, inadvertently, a member making a statement may be mistaken, or, in turn, that a member listening may misunderstand what another has stated.

[Translation]

The Chair acknowledges the dissatisfaction members expressed about the responses they received in committee of the whole. After all, the consideration of estimates is an essential accountability exercise, but taking into account the explanations provided by the minister and the parliamentary secretary, there indeed seems to be a dispute as to the facts.

If every disagreement is to be raised as a question of privilege, the House would spend its time doing little else. There are many opportunities in our debates for members to challenge each other on the facts of a particular case, and that is the correct way of dealing with such disagreements. For there to be a *prima facie* question of privilege, members must also present some evidence of a deliberate attempt to mislead. I have not seen any such evidence in this case.

[English]

Furthermore, and before closing, as Speaker, I am bound to accepting members at their word, a long-standing tradition of this place. As one of my predecessors, the current Leader of the Opposition, indicated on April 29, 2015, at page 13198 of the Debates:

as your Speaker, I must take all members at their word. To do otherwise, to take it upon myself to assess the truthfulness or accuracy of Members' statements is not a role which has been conferred on me, nor that the House has indicated that it would somehow wish the Chair to assume, with all of its implications.

Accordingly, the Chair does not find there to be *prima facie* questions of privilege in either case.

I thank all members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.) moved that Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by acknowledging that we are gathering on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

It is a privilege to stand here this morning, as Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, to present Bill C-3, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, 2025. This bill is an important opportunity to address issues in Canada's citizenship legislation with the intention of restoring and providing access to citizenship for those who have been impacted. We often refer to this group as “lost Canadians”, those people who lost or were denied citizenship status because of provisions in previous legislation that we would now consider outdated. The term “lost Canadians” can also be used to describe people who are not Canadian citizens today because they are excluded by the first-generation rule.

Although this bill was introduced as Bill C-71 in the previous session, Parliament did not complete its review before the end of the session. As a result, this is the reintroduction of a bill that had been introduced and on which debate had started. The previous government put in place—

• (1025)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order regarding the audio on the English channel.

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to ask and look to members regarding whether their audio is working correctly while I speak.

[Translation]

I will now speak in French to make sure they can hear.

[English]

The hon. Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, now that we have clearly identified that the audio is working in both languages, I appreciate this historic opportunity to stand today and really make right what is a wrong.

I will continue by saying that this bill was already introduced in the last Parliament but did not go through all the stages. The previous government put in place interim measures to allow lost Canadians affected by the first-generation rule limit to be offered a discretionary grant of citizenship until corrective legislation was passed.

[Translation]

The bill I am introducing today is substantively the same as Bill C-71 to ensure continuity. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues in the House and in committee as we resume our work.

As my colleagues may already be aware, there are three ways to become a Canadian citizen: by being born in Canada, by going through the naturalization process after immigrating from another country or by passing it on to one's children. Each of these ways of becoming Canadian has its own story.

[English]

Regardless of a person's path to citizenship, we all share a common bond: our commitment to the rights, responsibilities and shared values that define life in Canada. We live in a country that supports human rights, equality and respect for all people. The integrity of our values depends on how we extend them, especially in areas like citizenship by descent, where issues persist for some families due to decisions made decades ago.

Canada's history has been shaped by generations of people who chose to pursue their dreams and raise their families here, including many who, like my own family in Nova Scotia and many who arrived through Pier 21 in Halifax, arrived from abroad seeking opportunity and built a new life through hard work and perseverance.

[Translation]

To understand the challenge we face, it is important to take a moment to review the history of Canadian citizenship law.

[English]

The first Canadian Citizenship Act was enacted in 1947. At that time, certain provisions existed that could prevent individuals from obtaining citizenship or cause them to lose it even if they had strong ties to Canada. These outdated provisions have gradually been amended or repealed over time, most notably with the introduction of a new Citizenship Act in 1977.

The individuals affected by these provisions have come to be known as “lost Canadians”. Amendments made to the Citizenship Act in 2009 and 2015 resolved the majority of these older cases. Since 2009, approximately 20,000 people have contacted our department and received a certificate of Canadian citizenship thanks to those amendments.

Over the decades, changes to citizenship laws have meant that Canadians could pass citizenship on to their children and grandchildren born abroad, but only if certain conditions were met. After the new Citizenship Act came into force in 1977, children born outside Canada to a Canadian parent who was also born abroad had to make a formal application before the age of 28 to retain their citizenship. If they did not apply or if their application was refused, they lost it.

Some people were unaware of this requirement. Some made their lives in Canada without realizing that they risked becoming a new group of lost Canadians. My department previously received about 35 to 40 applications each year to remedy the status of people affected by this former rule. These numbers have been decreasing in recent years.

However, the 2009 legislative update that addressed most of the lost Canadian cases also introduced a new rule. Citizenship by descent was restricted to only the first generation of children born outside Canada, meaning that children born to Canadian citizens who were themselves born abroad would no longer automatically be citizens. This first-generation limit has since been challenged in court, which is why I am here today.

In December 2023, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that key provisions of the first-generation rule were unconstitutional.

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al. Its decision reminds us that all Canadian families must be treated fairly, no matter where their children are born, and that Canadians with a genuine connection to Canada should have the freedom to move abroad, start a family and then return without losing their right to pass on their Canadian identity and citizenship. The decision of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice reflects what many advocates have been saying for a long time: that some people are unacceptably excluded from citizenship by outdated or overly restrictive definitions. We need to approach this issue in a thoughtful and inclusive way.

There remains a very small, specific group of Canadians still affected by the old 28-year age requirement: those born outside Canada in the second or subsequent generation between 1977 and 1981 who had reached the age of 28 and lost their citizenship before the 2009 amendment came into force.

Challenges faced by lost Canadians have been thoughtfully raised in this House and other places. For example, back in 2022, Senator Yonah Martin introduced a Senate public bill, Bill S-245, to address the age 28 issue. Her work was supported by those personally affected by the bill, by legal scholars and by policy-makers across the political spectrum. Bill S-245 was then amended by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration to provide access to citizenship by descent beyond the first generation for those who can demonstrate a substantial connection to Canada.

This is where our new bill, Bill C-3, picks up. It retains many elements of the committee's suggested improvements and reflects the input of experts and community voices.

● (1030)

[Translation]

I want to thank the many advocates who testified and gave their time and attention to help us update our citizenship law.

[English]

Bill C-3 proposes to restore Canadian citizenship to those who have lost it because of the now repealed age 28 rule. It would give Canadian citizenship to those born outside Canada to a Canadian parent in the second or subsequent generation before the new law comes into force. It would allow anyone adopted abroad by a Canadian parent, beyond the first generation, before this new law comes into force, to access the direct granting of citizenship for adopted persons.

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Going forward, the bill would permit access to citizenship beyond the first generation, as long as the Canadian parent demonstrates a substantial connection to Canada. That substantial connection will be measured by physical presence in Canada. In order to pass down their Canadian citizenship, the Canadian parent must have spent three years in total in this country, or 1,095 days cumulatively, but not necessarily consecutively, before the birth of their child.

Bill C-3 would also allow Canadian adoptive parents born outside Canada to access a grant of citizenship for their children adopted abroad if they meet the same substantial connection criteria. If the adoptive parent was physically present in Canada for three years in total prior to the adoption, their child can access the adoption grant of citizenship. Of course, they would have to apply as well.

We recognize that citizenship cannot and should not be imposed on people who do not wish to hold it, so these choices must remain accessible, humane and free of bureaucratic burden, especially for those navigating complex international legal systems. In many countries, dual citizenship is not permitted in certain jobs, including government, military and national security positions. In some countries, having citizenship in another country can present legal, professional or other barriers, including restricting access to benefits. That is why the bill would also provide access to the same simplified renunciation process as the one established in 2009.

● (1035)

[Translation]

If this bill is adopted, we are committed to fully implementing the proposed amendments without delay. This legislative update is not only necessary, it is urgent. It is urgent because families have waited far too long to be recognized as Canadians under the law. They waited while the courts deliberated. They waited while governments debated. Today, let us end their wait.

[English]

As we respond to the ruling that the provision is unconstitutional and to decades of heartfelt calls for justice, we have an opportunity to reaffirm that Canadian citizenship is not only a legal status but a living expression of our shared values. I invite all members of the House to move the legislation forward, and I welcome constructive dialogue on any refinements that are needed, both here in the House and as we advance to the committee stage.

I very much look forward to working across party lines to see the bill enacted as speedily as possible. As I said, many people have been waiting. Together we can ensure that the Citizenship Act reflects the spirit of Canadian identity.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke about the responsibilities of Canadian citizens, but those responsibilities include paying taxes to pay for services such as health care. The bill goes well beyond closing a loophole for a small group of people, which previous Conservative legislation and Conservatives supported.

By contrast, the PBO estimated that the bill would grant citizenship to over 100,000 people in five years. There are no security vetting requirements for persons who fall under the bill, and the bill

contains no consecutive residency requirements. Failing that, the bill contains no requirements for people without consecutive residency for any mechanism such as, let us say, paying taxes.

Why would the minister, knowing all the testimony that happened in the last Parliament on this particular issue, continue to devalue Canadian citizenship in this way?

● (1040)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, allow me, first of all, as we start to debate on the bill, to take a moment to thank again the stakeholders across the country, including Don Chapman, who is the head of the lost Canadian website and who has been a tireless advocate for this.

Let me also clarify the record. I look forward to the committee study on this, but the majority of lost Canadian cases were remedied by the legislative amendments that were implemented in 2009 and 2015, with approximately 20,000 people at the time acquiring citizenship.

We know from history that not everyone is going to apply through this. We are here again to right a wrong. There is a constitutional issue in front of us, leaving us with no choice but to enact legislation.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member has held the important and critical position of immigration minister for over a month now.

Quebec is experiencing major issues, including with the temporary foreign worker program, and the federal government has been dragging its feet for a long time.

Today, I am very pleased to see Bill C-3 has been introduced. It is a good bill, which we were in favour of during the previous Parliament.

However, on the minister's list of priorities, can we know when Quebec and Canadian businesses will have reassurances about the fact that they are currently having to let go of employees who have become part of the company and the community, because the federal government has been dragging its feet on this issue?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak to this bill to amend the Citizenship Act. I am here to say that it is very important to work on getting this bill through committee and the House.

I look forward to the co-operation of all parliamentarians who are working in the House to move this bill forward.

[English]

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for tabling this bill. A similar bill was before the last Parliament, and the Conservatives filibustered the House, preventing it from getting to third reading, prompting the courts to yet again extend another extension to get the law passed so that Canada's immigration Citizenship Act would be charter-compliant.

What are the minister's thoughts about the Conservatives' tactics when they first took away lost Canadians' rights to have citizenship passed on to their children, then filibustered it in the last Parliament and are now speaking against it once again?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, those are valid points. As I stated already, I do look forward to the co-operation of all parties in the House.

It is important to remind members, as well as viewers, who have really been waiting for this for years, that the reason we are here today is that sections of this were declared unconstitutional by the Ontario Supreme Court on December 19, 2023, and Parliament has had x amount of time to remedy this. We were not able to move it forward in the last session, unfortunately, because of various things, including the election, so I am here again to present the bill in order to move it forward.

What we have done in this bill is to strike a balance by protecting the value of citizenship going forward and limiting it to those whose parent has a substantial connection to Canada. If we do not do anything, then we risk losing that, and anybody could potentially apply. This is a good legislation, and I very much look forward to all colleagues working with us to advance this.

• (1045)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for the minister to continue.

The minister talked about a Supreme Court decision that obligates the government to take a specific action. Many of us have participated in citizenship courts. We all have an appreciation of the true value of being able to travel in Canada or around the world with a Canadian passport, how meaningful that is and the types of rights we have as Canadian citizens. This is indeed important legislation, and it is a direct response to a court decision.

I very much appreciate the manner in which the minister opened the legislation up for potential amendments and to listen to what members might have to say. Would she like to provide further thoughts on how important it is?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, again, I am looking forward to constructive dialogue from all parties, whether it is today or in committee.

We are taking the responsible step of approaching the court decision by creating a framework to citizenship by descent, including creating the need to demonstrate a strong connection to Canada.

I am very much looking forward to July 1, because on July 1, traditionally, for the last many years and decades, I go to citizenship ceremonies. This year, it will be very special because I will again be at Pier 21, which is where over a million immigrants entered

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Canada between 1928 and 1971. This legislation would directly affect—

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

The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that a lot of new immigrants have when coming to this country is getting through security screening. Those of us who process files in our offices know they can take up to a year or even longer to get through this security screening process. I would note that in the bill, there is no proposal for those who are going to be given citizenship to have any kind of security screening at all. I am wondering if the minister can comment on how it makes any sense to grant citizenship to people without even checking to see if they have committed or have been convicted of serious crimes.

There is nothing like that in the legislation, and I wonder what the minister thinks of that.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, again, I am going to reiterate that the reason we are here today is a decision made by a court that rendered these provisions unconstitutional. If we do absolutely nothing, it will put Canadians at risk, and it would really be a tragedy for those who have been waiting for years to have their citizenship recognized.

I very much look forward to members discussing and debating this and receiving any amendments or constructive advice.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague, the minister, for her bill. The Bloc Québécois has already said that we will vote in favour of this bill, so she does not have to work very hard to convince us.

However, my colleague from Drummond asked her a question that we did not get an answer to. I worked with the minister on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in the last Parliament, so I know how thorough she is. I know that she must be very eager to respond.

I would therefore ask the minister to respond to my colleague from Drummond. Can we count on her to solve the other immigration issues, especially when it comes to workers who are integrated, who have a job and who are learning the language?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleague. We worked together on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I am here to work on immigration issues with him and all the members of his team.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first speech in the new Parliament, I just want to take a moment to thank the citizens of Saskatoon West for once again returning me to Ottawa as their MP.

Of course at the same time, I want to thank some of those who helped me. I start with my family. We all know we cannot succeed in this place without our family behind us. I want to thank my wife, Cheryl; my sons, Kyle and Eric; and my aging parents, Alvin and Irene Redekopp, who were not able to help as much this time, but they are always behind me in spirit.

I had a core campaign team of Steve, Daniel, Jared, Marian, Lisa, Carol, Jason, Deb and Judy, and a core door knocking team of Ope, Yash, Sutter, Rito, Effay and Doug. I want to thank all volunteers, donors and everybody who helped.

I will continue to do my very best to represent Saskatoon West here in this place and bring the voices of Saskatoon here to Ottawa.

I will now talk about Bill C-3. It is recycled legislation, as the minister just pointed out, which was tabled as Bill C-71 in the previous Parliament. Actually, Bill C-71 was retread legislation of Bill S-245, a private member's bill that was heavily amended by the government with the help of the former party that used to exist in this place, called the New Democratic Party. The Conservatives opposed the bill then, and we continue to have significant issues with the bill.

There are three major parts to the bill. The first is citizenship by descent, the second is a provision for adopted children, and the third is fixing a problem with lost Canadians, which is an issue in the current legislation.

Conservatives cannot support the bill in its current form, and the main reason is the citizenship by descent. The bill would dilute the integrity of Canadian citizenship by automatically extending it to multiple generations born abroad with only a minimal connection to Canada. This is a classic Liberal solution to a problem. We have a problem, as the minister pointed out, and I will speak about a court case in a bit, and there are reasons this needs to be done, but the fix the Liberals came up with is a poor one. It is a bad one. It would not really solve the problem in an adequate way.

Conservatives will introduce amendments at committee. As Andrew Griffith from Policy Options said, "Canadian citizenship is a precious gift. At the committee stage, members of Parliament must be able to fulsomely examine the implications of an open-ended residency requirement", and we will do that.

I first want to speak about citizenship by descent, why it is problematic, and why we will vote against. For some background, how did we get here? Prior to 2009, it was possible for Canadian citizens to pass on their citizenship to endless generations born outside Canada. A person did not need to have much of a connection to Canada; they could have never lived in Canada but yet could pass on citizenship over and over, generation after generation.

Something happened in the mid-2000s, a crisis in Lebanon, and many Lebanese Canadians were concerned about their safety and the situation going on in Beirut, so they made sure they passed their

citizenship on to their children. When things got really, really difficult in Beirut, they called on the Canadian government to rescue them. In 2006, the Canadian government spent \$94 million bringing about 15,000 Lebanese Canadians to Canada. They were Canadian citizens, but for the most part they had rarely or never lived in Canada. These people benefited from citizenship with minimal connection to Canada, and they became known as the "Canadians of convenience".

Interestingly, what happened is that a lot of these people were rescued from Beirut, came to Canada for a bit, but many of them went right back to Lebanon, and that was it for their connection to Canada, but it cost Canadian taxpayers \$94 million. This led to a bill by the Harper government to create what was known as the first-generation rule.

After 2009, the rule changed so a citizen born outside of Canada could pass their citizenship to their child born outside of Canada for one generation, but someone from the next generation born outside of Canada was not automatically a citizen. That was called the first-generation limit, and the bill now would effectively abolish that rule and allow people to confer citizenship on their children generation after generation for one measly requirement of spending 1095 days in Canada, which I will talk about a little more. All someone would need to do to meet the requirements is live a few years in Canada.

Why are we doing this now? In 2023, the Ontario Superior Court ruled that the first-generation rule was unconstitutional, so the Liberal government, in its great wisdom, chose not to appeal it but to just accept that ruling. It could have appealed it to a higher court, and it chose not to; it committed to changing the law.

• (1050)

The court did say, though, that it was reasonable to apply a substantial connection test. It understood that we cannot just give citizenship out like candy; there has to be some sort of a connection to Canada. The court said that if we put in some sort of a substantial connection test, that would be okay according to the law.

The Liberal government chose to create a substantial connection test that is not substantial at all. The test is 1,095 days, which is about three years. People would have to spend that much time in Canada prior to the birth of a child. It is not consecutive days; it could be a month here, a month there, and three years is very weak. The government would not even know, really, if people have been in Canada for that time. There would be an affidavit that a person would sign. It is a very weak way to commit to being a Canadian citizen and then to confer that citizenship onto children. It is not a real test of commitment, because the days do not have to be consecutive.

The other issue is that there would be no criminal background check at all. Once again, we could be passing on citizenship to children who potentially could have serious convictions or a criminal background, but we would not know because we would not even check. When we have newcomers coming to our country, the government puts a lot of effort into checking the security background of those people, and it can take up to a year or longer for newcomers to get processed through security.

Andrew Griffith, from Policy Options, said:

To remedy the issue, Bill C-71 [speaking about the previous legislation] uses residency as the “substantial connection test.”

However, the new standard in Bill C-71, which requires a foreign-born Canadian parent to have spent a total of 1,095 days in Canada...differs significantly from what is required of new Canadians.

...the government has failed to fully consider the implications of such an open-ended condition.

I might note that in the U.S., people can confer citizenship only to the first generation. They have to have at least five years in the U.S., with two of those years being after the age of 14, and there is also very strict screening. In the U.K., it is only the first generation that can be admitted. There are some very strict rules in our partner countries that the Liberal government has chosen not to enforce, creating an extremely weak connection test.

This brings up a question: What does it mean to be a citizen? I believe that the bill cheapens that. There is an organization called the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. It does great work on this subject of citizenship and helps a lot of newcomers in our country. Daniel Bernhard, who is the CEO, said this:

The sense of belonging is very powerful. If people don't consider Canada to be their society, then they won't dedicate themselves to it, or get involved in our culture and contribute their utmost to making our society a success. That's a danger of concern to all of us.

We must roll up our sleeves to restore the value of being Canadian.

Citizenship is a connection to one's home country. It is being there for one's country in times that are good and bad. It is enjoying the peace of Canada, proudly participating in wars when necessary and being available for keeping the peace at other times. Also, people need to understand the current situation in our country. They need to live here to understand how things are and some of the issues we have right now in our country, with an epidemic of crime; expensive and unavailable housing; difficulties in health care, including trying to find doctors and waiting lists; high taxes; and a drug crisis, including fentanyl, in our country right now. People do not know that if they are living in another country.

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It is also important to understand our history and be proud of our accomplishments, such as being proud of our sports teams, even though some people may cheer for sports teams outside of Canada. Nobody does that, right? We need to be proud of our teams and of the beauty in our country. We need to believe in our Canadian values and norms: democracy, equality and not engaging in religious squabbles and wars. Many people come to our country from other countries, and they bring their culture, food and all the good parts of their countries. Often, they are escaping bad situations, including war and fighting. We do not need to bring those wars to Canada; we can bring the good parts and build a country and a society that works for us here.

People who come here enjoy our social safety net, but it is so important that they participate by paying taxes in order to enjoy that. It is something that Canada is proud of; we take great care of our people, but there is a cost for that. It is very unfair when people who have never had any participation in our tax system then expect to receive benefits from it.

Canadians proudly display our Canadian flag on Canada Day and, of course, are allowed to vote in elections to decide governments.

● (1055)

In 2010, one of our best immigration ministers ever, Jason Kenney, said the following:

Citizenship is about far more than a right to carry a passport or to vote. It defines who we are as Canadians, including our mutual responsibilities to one another and a shared commitment to the values that are rooted in our history, like freedom, unity and loyalty. That is why we must protect the values of Canadian citizenship and must take steps against those who would cheapen it.

I think the legislation would actually cheapen it. The Liberals have worked hard to cheapen what it means to be a Canadian citizen. I point to the comments made by the previous prime minister, Justin Trudeau, about Canada being a postnational country and about how citizenship and being Canada does not mean much other than the borders around us.

We just have to look at the passport to see that. The way the Liberal government changed the passport to take away all the symbols that mean anything and replace them with meaningless pictures and things that do not mean anything and do not provide any sense of what it means to be Canadian is just a small example of the way the government has been moving to cheapen citizenship. I believe that the bill would just add further to that.

One of the big concerns that I have is also the uncontrolled citizenship expansion that would be allowed through the bill. Ken Nickel-Lane, who is an immigration consultant, said in the *Times of India*, “This announcement, at least on initial reading looks like it will open up the chain of citizenship without end”. He is completely correct about that.

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When the issue under the previous legislation was at immigration committee in the previous Parliament, we asked many questions to IRCC department officials about how many people would receive citizenship under the provisions. They could not answer the question. They would not answer the question. We asked repeatedly, and we asked in many different ways. They never answered the question.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer actually did a study on the bill, on Bill C-71 in the last Parliament, and estimated that it would create at least 115,000 new citizens in the first five years, most of them living abroad. Of course, that number could then double every generation, so we could end up with a lot of new citizens who really have minimal connection to Canada and just do not ever actually participate in anything in Canada. Andrew Griffith from Policy Options said, "There are an estimated four million Canadians living outside Canada, [and] about half of them were born abroad."

We have to be very careful that we do not add to our burdens by giving citizenship to people who do not participate in Canada at all. It is just no surprise the government cannot answer questions about numbers. People who were here last week might recall that when we were questioning the minister on the estimates, we asked all kinds of questions about really key marquee policy items.

One of the marquee policies of the Liberal government is to reduce non-permanent residents. I was asking the minister about these numbers, and she did not have any clue what they were. Another marquee policy is reducing the population this year. The overall population is projected by the government to drop by half a million people, but it has not dropped at all yet, and yet the minister seemed to have no knowledge of that. Therefore it does not surprise me that the minister and the department have no clue how many people the legislation would impact. I think that is really to know how it would impact Canada.

Another issue that goes along with that is the cost. How much would it cost taxpayers to have the legislation? Again, IRCC officials had no clue; they did not have an answer to that. Apparently they had not looked into it at all, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer did and estimated it would be about \$21 million in admin costs over five years. That would be to process additional claims for citizenship, passports and applicants to social programs.

By the way, if 115,000 people started getting old age security at age 65, if these people actually came to live in Canada and collected old age security, that would be a billion dollars a year. The potential for cost to the Canadian taxpayer is very, very huge here. We cannot underestimate that.

Andrew Griffith said, "IRCC needs to determine and share estimates for the approximate number of new citizens expected under the change, along with the incremental workload and resources that are required before the bill goes before committee." I would echo that. We need to know those numbers so we can properly study the bill.

To summarize citizenship by descent, it would remove the first-generation limit and allows citizenship to be conferred generation after generation with a simple, weak, "substantial connection" test of 1,095 non-consecutive days in Canada. There would be no crimi-

nal background check at all required with this. For those reasons, we cannot support it.

● (1100)

There is a second provision in the bill, and that is the provision for adopted children. Currently, if a person adopts a child from abroad, once the adoption is completed, they have to go through the process of applying for permanent residency for them, just like anyone else would, and it takes a long time. There are a lot of costs involved, legal costs, and it can be a stressful time for a new family. The bill would essentially treat an adopted child from abroad as though they were born in Canada, so once the adoption is finalized, that child would be given Canadian citizenship. We support that. We support the equal treatment of adopted children. We have done that in the past, and we will continue to support that. It makes sense. It is a common-sense change, so parents would not be penalized for adopting children from overseas and those children could be treated in the same manner as they would be if they were born in Canada. I spoke to this in the previous Parliament when it came up at committee. The chair well knows that we supported it, and we would support this provision if it were by itself.

The third part of this legislation is on restoring lost Canadians. This part is also reasonable, and when it came to committee, we were supportive of it. The easiest way to understand it is that immigration and citizenship law is very complicated. When changes are made over the years, sometimes there are unintended consequences, which is what happened here. There was a group of people born within a four-year stretch, from I believe 1977 to 1981, who had to apply for citizenship by the age of 28, and if they did not, they lost it, which was never the intention of the law. It was just a glitch that ended up there because of the way the laws were amended over the years, so this does need to be fixed, because nobody should lose their citizenship. In fact, Senator Yonah Martin brought this forward in Bill S-245, and she said:

Many of these individuals were raised in Canada from a young age. Though they were born abroad, some came to Canada at a young age, as infants, in some cases. They went to school in Canada. They raised their families in Canada. They worked and paid taxes in Canada, and yet, they turned 28 without knowing that their citizenship would be stripped from them because of the change in policy [in] 1977 that required Canadians...to apply to retain their citizenship when they turned 28.

That is the essence of what this piece of the bill would do. It would fix a problem that came about because of unintended consequences. The bill that was brought in by Senator Martin was intended to just fix this issue, because many had tried to fix it, but nobody succeeded. Unfortunately, when it came to committee, the Liberal government, with the help of the former party that used to exist in this place, the New Democrats, actually ganged up on Senator Martin's private member's bill and made substantial changes to it to incorporate things such as citizenship by descent. It was a very unfair thing to have a private member's bill commandeered by the government, with the help of NDP members, yet that is what happened, so that bill did not make it forward. It is a reminder to the House that we need to respect certain things, and private member's bills are something that really need to be respected.

To summarize, there are elements of the bill that we support, as I mentioned. We support the elements dealing with adoption and with lost Canadians, but we cannot support citizenship by descent for endless generations. We cannot allow endless generations to have a very weak connection to Canada and still get their citizenship conferred. We cannot stand by and not have a background check, and we have to be very careful that we do not create new unintended consequences, as has happened in the past.

I must remind everyone that the Liberals broke our immigration system. For years, Canadians agreed on immigration. We brought in skilled labour to fill gaps in our labour force. We helped displaced and poorly treated people from all over the world find a new home in Canada. We had a balanced, reasonable and fair policy for immigrants, which was good for our economy and it was good for Canada, but then the Liberals blew it up. They opened the floodgates. They brought in millions of people and jammed up the bureaucracy so that files now take years to process, and having too many cases led to mistakes. Last year, a father and son were given a security clearance even though there was a video from 2015 that showed them violently participating in things, and they were actually planning a terror plot. Mistakes happened because of jammed up systems.

Let us be clear that this is not the fault of newcomers to our country. Clearly, it is the fault of the government. Immigrants were just doing what the Liberal government asked them to do. They had no idea they were coming to a country that was not prepared for them. This left all Canadians dealing with housing shortages, sky-high job shortages, health care problems, etc. Conservatives believe in strong, fair immigration citizenship rules that respect—

• (1105)

The Deputy Speaker: It is time for questions and comments.

The hon. government deputy House leader.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had lots of opportunities to work with the member opposite on this specific legislation in the House during the last Parliament.

I remember when we were able to pass it and commit it to families across Canada, some of whom were our constituents. We told them that we were committed to making sure that we were not going to have their children lose their citizenship and that they were not going to be part of the list of lost Canadians.

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I remember, if my memory serves me correctly, the member opposite supported this. What changed?

• (1110)

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, the member is speaking about lost Canadians and the people who should not lose their citizenship. We supported that. I supported that in the previous Parliament. That was the whole purpose of the senator's Bill S-245. It was to fix that problem.

That was a simple bill that came forward. Then that member and her party, along with members of the NDP, hijacked that private member's bill, adding a whole bunch of things. They changed it far beyond what was originally intended. In fact, the purpose of making it really simple and easy to digest, about the lost Canadians, was to actually get it through the process, because many had failed before.

That was the whole point. It was to make it simple and get it through, yet that member and the Liberal government complicated it, added to it, hijacked the bill and made it something that was bad for Canadians, something that we could not support.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, I wish you could take part in this debate. That is the last time I will say it.

I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I was obviously already somewhat familiar with his position on the matter, since I also worked on Bill S-245 and Bill C-71. Right now, we are working on Bill C-3. We have been working on this issue for years, so I think we all know where everyone stands.

Does my colleague agree with me that the bill should be sent to committee quickly? When the time comes to send it to committee, it will need to be considered quickly, as well as thoroughly, of course. We need to move on.

Does the member believe, as I do, that the immigration system is completely dysfunctional right now? We need only think of the asylum system, work permits and temporary foreign workers. Should we not be dealing with other urgent issues involving the immigration system? We have known for 10 years how people will vote on this bill.

[*English*]

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I do great work together at the committee, and I hope to continue that.

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We have to be careful in ramming things through this place. He is not wrong. We do need to deal with this issue. We need to get the amendments that we want out. We need to speak about it and have that debate, yet I hesitate to agree to push it through quickly because that is how mistakes get made. This bill has potential long-term implications for Canadians with the ability to confer citizenship generation after generation. I do believe we need to give it its due consideration.

As the member pointed out, we have many other major issues. The immigration system is badly broken, with many problems that need to be examined. I can certainly imagine that the immigration committee is going to be very consumed with all kinds of issues because of the broken system that the Liberals created.

Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's very informative speech this morning.

One of the things I found a little shocking, and I am sure most Canadians would like to know a bit more about, is the opening up of our citizenship for people coming in, not having a security background check, and the implications that could have to our already burgeoning and struggling justice system.

What, if any, amendments could be brought forward to tighten up that part of the bill for Canadians going forward?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, as everyone in the chamber knows, Canada is suffering from an increase in crime because of the way the Liberal government changed the laws, particularly around bail, and weakened statutes, along with other ways that have made it easier for criminals to stay out of jail.

We have to be very careful about crime and to not do anything to potentially increase it. That is why I am very concerned that this bill has no provision for any kind of security check on the new citizenship that it would create. That does not make any sense. It is not the same standard that we apply to others who are given citizenship.

We need to be extremely cautious and careful about not checking backgrounds and not checking for convictions and things like that. It is very important to do that and make those changes in the bill.

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the private member's bill from Senator Yonah Martin. Of course, that bill was amended, which Conservatives opposed and filibustered at committee.

The government then tabled Bill C-71, to which the Conservatives said it needed to be a government bill with all those changes. The government did, in fact, belatedly table Bill C-71 in the House. Conservatives then filibustered that.

We now have Bill C-3, and Conservatives are now saying they do not support it.

My question for the member is this: Why are the Conservatives so persistent in trying to prevent Canada's Citizenship Act from being charter-compliant and having the gender discrimination component within it, as it applies to lost Canadians, rectified?

• (1115)

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are concerned about citizenship and want to make sure crazy things are not implemented into our system. That is why we take the time to look at things. We make sure that we give it proper investigation and bring in the proper experts, and that is what happened.

The member mentioned Bill C-71. That was completely under the control of the government. That had nothing to do with us. The government controlled the agenda. It could have brought it forward. It could have made changes. It could have had that implemented if it chose to. It was not able to control the calendar in a way that made any sense, and it was not able to get it done, just like so many things the Liberal government was unable to get done in the last Parliament.

I want to point out that the member, and others from the former party that used to exist in the House, were right beside the Liberals all the way along. They were helping them at every single step. That may be why they are in the position they are in today.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech that was shared. I listened to it on my way to the House.

I have a twofold question.

The first is with respect to the constituents of the riding of Waterloo. I was able to interact with a constituent who was born to Canadian tax-paying citizens abroad. Her mother was travelling abroad for a Canadian company and had to have an emergency delivery, so because her child was born abroad, without that intention, the child did not have the right to Canadian citizenship. Once again, her parents were living in Canada and were Canadian taxpayers, so there is a bit of a discrepancy.

My first question would be this: Does the member agree with or respect the ruling of the courts? Does he want to ensure that the legislation is compliant with the laws and the charter of our country?

The second question is in regard to advancing the bill to committee. Does the member agree that we cannot pass amendments at second reading? The committee would have to study that legislation and send it back with improvements or suggestions, which would be the right course of action to get some work done around here.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, the member knows well the processes of the House. Obviously, it could be done at committee. That is a good thing.

We all know of unique cases that have happened. We cannot craft legislation that covers every single situation. Sometimes it works out well for people, and sometimes there is a bit more work that is required.

What is really critical, from my perspective, is that the legislation we create covers all situations. We have to make sure we do not allow bad legislation to get through that allows for loopholes such as, for example, the father and son who were given citizenship, who clearly should not have, because security checks were not properly made. Therefore, we have to make sure that the legislation we approve in the House is as solid as can be. That is why the process we are going through here in the House is so important, and what the bill will go through at committee is vital.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the amendments that needs to be made to the bill to prevent endless chain migration, which the bill currently provides for without any sort of consecutive residency requirement, is to ensure that those who the bill applies to spend some sort of substantive length of time in Canada in a consecutive manner. The bill does not apply to that. Right now, ad infinitum, descendants could just apply for citizenship after having spent a thousand days in Canada over the course of their lifetime and then claim health care benefits.

Does the member agree that there should be a consecutive residency requirement of some nature in the bill?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree. That is one of the key things. If we look at some of the other countries, we see they have much more stringent requirements. I think we should have at least a consecutive requirement. Even three years, in my mind, would not be enough. If we look at the U.S., for example, it has a five-year requirement, and two of those years have to be after the age of 14. I think we can look to our peer countries to find many good examples of how to make a more substantial connection test, and having consecutive days is key to that.

• (1120)

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that this will be the last time I give a speech on such a bill at second reading. That is a lot, considering Bill S-245 and Bill C-71. That brings us to Bill C-3. I hope this will be resolved once and for all.

A few months ago, I stood in the House to speak to Bill C-71, which was in fact a reintroduction of Bill S-245, which sought to correct a historic wrong by granting citizenship to Canadians whose cases had slipped through the cracks. I spoke about children of Canadian parents who had been born abroad and lost their citizenship because of changes in the federal rules or for other reasons that struck me as hard to justify at the time. Bills S-245 and C-71 basically sought to restore citizenship to all these people who had lost their status due to the overly complex and often unjust provisions of previous Canadian laws.

This idea is taken up again in Bill C-3, which was recently introduced by the government. In fact, Bill C-3 incorporates all of the amendments proposed to Bill C-71 in the previous Parliament, which sought to correct these injustices and errors in the major legislation that is the Citizenship Act.

The bill responds to an Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling which declared that the first-generation limit on citizenship applicable to the children of Canadians born abroad is unconstitutional.

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The government then had six months to amend the law. Bill C-3 was introduced as a fallback, because Bill S-245 and even Bill C-71, unfortunately, could not get across the finish line. While unfortunate, it was partly due to some crass partisanship on the part of certain political parties.

In this regard, I must point out the following. In spite of my occasional differences of opinion with my colleagues from the other parties represented in the House, as members know, I try not to get caught up in that. I am not in the habit of obstructing during committee meetings. I would even say that, especially with this kind of issue, working across party lines often helps us get results. Personally, it helps me do my work even better for the people of Lac-Saint-Jean whom I have had the honour of representing in the House since 2019.

Today, I will speak not only for Quebeckers, but also for a good many Canadians whose IRCC files have been stalled for too long. As the Bloc Québécois critic for immigration, refugees and citizenship, I want to talk about Canadian citizenship. That might seem odd coming from someone from my party, but it affects everyone here and a good many Quebeckers. I want to talk today about the people we now refer to as “lost Canadians”, those who lost their citizenship because of an often little-known but truly ridiculous provision.

According to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's estimates, there are still between 100 and 200 people who have not yet regained their citizenship. They are the last group of “lost Canadians”. Bill C-3 corrects an oversight in the 2009 amendment to the Citizenship Act, which missed a golden opportunity to do away with the requirement for these people to apply to retain their citizenship when they turned 28. That measure in the 2009 amendment to the act was completely arbitrary and should have been removed.

At the risk of ruining the surprise, and for the sake of consistency, I will say that, since we were in favour of Bill S-245 and Bill C-71, we are also in favour of Bill C-3. We believe it should be passed swiftly, but only after a thorough study. By that, I mean that we need to be efficient, but we absolutely must not pass this bill under closure. I urge all parties not to use what I feel is an undemocratic tool that most parties in the House enjoy using, depending on the Parliament and the whim of the government. I am saying that the bill should be passed swiftly, but following the usual process, meaning we should study it in committee and hear expert testimony. I will listen to amendments by members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. We will study them and, as I said, rigorously analyze the bill. Afterwards, we will have discussions, but we already know what to expect, given that we have already been having these conversations in committee for many years.

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● (1125)

We want to ensure that the scope of the legislation remains as we intend it to be. I think that, already, we can expect that there will not be many amendments, since Bill C-3 essentially incorporates the amendments that were already proposed to Bill C-71. If we think about it, this bill is perfectly in line with what our contemporary vision of citizenship should be. Once citizenship has been duly granted, it should never be taken away from an individual, unless it is for reasons of national security. Only a citizen can freely renounce his or her citizenship, and the government should not strip anyone of their citizenship based on a mere formality, such as the need to file to retain their citizenship by their 28th birthday.

Like all parties in the House, the Bloc Québécois supports and defends the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that all are equal before the law. In fact, citizenship is an egalitarian legal status granted to all members of the same community. It confers privileges as well as duties. In this case, the Canadian government has failed in meeting its obligations to its citizens. This situation cannot be allowed to continue because citizenship must apply equally to all. This is simply a matter of principle that we are debating today. I do not believe I am alone in thinking that it is profoundly unfair that, in 2022, people can lose their citizenship for reasons that they probably do not even know exist. These provisions are from another time when there were questionable ideas about what it meant to be a citizen of Canada. Since time has not remedied the situation and since the reforms of the past have not been prescriptive enough, then politicians must weigh in.

We know the path to reclaiming Canadian citizenship is far too complex. Let us be frank: the federal apparatus is not really the most efficient when it comes to managing Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada files. I think the Department of Citizenship and Immigration is undoubtedly the most dysfunctional department in the entire federal government. We need only look back to find examples of how slow the federal administration is. There was a legislative reform in 2005, another one in 2009 and yet another in 2015. How many reforms will it take before we get rid of such ridiculous rules as losing one's citizenship because of a failure to reapply before the age of 28?

Currently, there are many citizens who were forgotten during those reforms. They are men, women, military spouses, children of soldiers, children born abroad, members of indigenous and Chinese-Canadian communities, people who fell through the cracks because previous reforms did not properly fix the act. Bill C-3 seeks to ensure that past wrongs will not be repeated. The bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act to, among other things:

- (a) ensure that citizenship by descent is conferred on all persons who were born outside Canada before the coming into force of this enactment to a parent who was a citizen;
- (b) confer citizenship by descent on persons born outside Canada after the first generation...
- (c) allow citizenship to be granted...to all persons born outside Canada who were adopted before the coming into force of this enactment by a parent who was a citizen...
- (e) restore citizenship to persons who lost their citizenship because they did not make an application to retain it under the former section 8 of that Act or because they made an application under that section that was not approved...

This refers to this notorious and completely ridiculous provision that has been on the books since 2009. Normally, former Bill C-71 should have received royal assent a long time ago, but parliamentary obstruction has gotten us to where we are today. People, women and children have had to wait because of political games and bickering between the federal parties. Crass, petty politics have been on full display in this Parliament over the past year.

The Bloc Québécois is here to work for our people. We are here working for Quebecers who care about Quebec's future, and not just when it is time to cater to their electoral ambitions. There are specific examples in Quebec. Take Jean-François, a Quebecer born outside Canada when his father was completing his doctorate in the United States. Even though he returned to Quebec when he was three months old and spent his entire life in Quebec, Jean-François's daughter was not automatically eligible for Canadian citizenship. This type of situation causes undue stress for families who should not have had to deal with the federal government's lax approach.

● (1130)

Despite what it says, this government is the same as its predecessor. This is not a new government. This government is piling up delays in processing citizenship and immigration applications for just about every program. That is what we see every time we check. It is not right that in 2022, 17 years after the first reform to fix lost Canadians' status, we are still talking about a bill to fix lost Canadians' status. That is completely mind-boggling. The public must sometimes wonder what we do here. That is not right.

In a situation like this, it is up to the government to come up with a solution that would allow individuals to regularize their status and regain their dignity once and for all, like all other citizens. It is a matter of principle. I said so at the beginning of my speech. As parliamentarians, we have to tackle our constituents' issues with a strong sense of duty, without getting into childish debates for purely dogmatic reasons. The "lost Canadians" problem should never have happened.

I repeat, citizenship must apply equally to all. Let us make one last reform, once and for all. We have to get it right this time, as a matter of equality, justice and principle. These families have been waiting long enough, and they deserve to have us working on their behalf.

That said, I think everyone agrees that we should not pass this bill under time allocation. As I said, we can pass it swiftly and efficiently while being thorough because we know exactly where all the parties that will sit on the committee stand on the issue. We know how all the parties will vote on the third reading of this bill.

I think we should move forward fairly quickly. As I said earlier when I asked my colleague a question, there are some urgent issues. The fundamental structure of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration needs to be changed with respect to several programs. I am thinking about the refugee system in particular. Is it reasonable for someone who has applied for asylum to have to wait four, five or six years? We saw one case where someone waited 12 years before their asylum application was processed. That person waited 12 years in a G7 country.

Wait times for work permit extensions are currently skyrocketing. I think they are now at 256 days. The measures that were rolled out in the fall for temporary foreign workers were a total fiasco for the Quebec regions. The immigration policies put in place by this government are one-size-fits-all, as though Calgary, Moose Jaw, Toronto, Montreal and Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean all had the same realities.

One-size-fits-all immigration measures do not work, especially in Quebec, where French language courses must be offered. This is obviously an additional challenge for integrating newcomers. We want immigration to succeed in Quebec, but right now, the federal government is acting as though Quebec were identical to all other Canadian provinces. Even among the other Canadian provinces, there are differences when it comes to integrating newcomers. The realities are not the same.

The territories that make up the country known as Canada are completely different and have completely different realities. The federal government is taking the same approach to immigration as it is taking with its new “one Canadian economy out of 13” plan. It is doing the same thing. The federal government seems to think that there is only one reality when it comes to immigration. That does not make any sense.

As I was saying, we need to do something about application processing times. We need to do something about the reforms that were put in place for temporary foreign workers, because they are not working. We need to do something about asylum seekers. We need to help them get their claims dealt with a lot more quickly, and most importantly, we need to distribute asylum seekers more evenly across Canada.

Currently, Quebec and Ontario are doing much more than their share and, unfortunately, their intake capacity is overwhelmed. It is not right that asylum seekers arriving in Montreal should end up homeless right away because there is no money to house them properly. In the meantime, there are provinces in the rest of Canada that are doing absolutely nothing. They are not doing their part to take in asylum seekers.

I would remind the House that in 2024, the former immigration minister announced with great fanfare that he was going to form a committee and that arrangements would be made to distribute asylum seekers across Canada. That is what he said at a major press conference. A solution had been found, and the committee was going to be set up. Since then, there has been radio silence. We have heard nothing more about it, and no solutions have ever been proposed.

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• (1135)

In the meantime, it is Quebec and Ontario once again that have to take care of welcoming the vast majority of asylum seekers. Again, there are issues that need to be addressed. Bill C-3 will tie up the committee, but it had better not tie it up for months because there are far too many other things that need to be addressed. That is why I am asking my colleagues to be diligent and to take their parliamentary work seriously. We know exactly where each party stands on this bill. We will listen to the amendments, if there are any. I think that we should definitely avoid filibustering this issue at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. I urge my colleagues to do the same. That does not mean we will not propose amendments, of course, but let us be serious and diligent, and let us address problems that are very urgent, not just for newcomers, but also for the communities that welcome them, like the ones in Quebec.

Ginette Lavack (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague for his speech and his support for Bill C-3, which seeks to correct significant injustices pertaining to citizenship.

I understand that the member is frustrated about the timing of the introduction of this bill, but parliamentarians have been debating these things for a long time. As a new MP, I am starting to learn and understand the system, and I know it could take some time.

Nevertheless, does my colleague think that the bill adequately addresses the concerns raised by the people affected, and how does he see it being implemented in Quebec?

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her election.

If this bill is passed, an injustice will certainly be corrected. Yes, these things take time. Sometimes, however, they do not take long enough. Would my colleague like to talk about Bill C-5? It makes no sense. That kind of bill should take plenty of time. Unfortunately, the government decided otherwise.

That said, I believe that Bill C-3 should be passed quickly, but it should still go through all the usual stages of a bill.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as has been expressed in debate today, Conservatives have deep concerns with two omissions in the bill. First, there is no consecutive residency requirement in the bill, which means somebody way down the generational chain could claim Canadian citizenship with no significant ties to Canada and no obligations to the country. The second thing is that there is no security vetting prior to the granting of citizenship.

Would my colleague entertain reasoned and smart amendments to rectify these deficiencies in the bill?

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[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, as I said, we will seriously study all of the amendments that are tabled.

I already see a few problems around these two issues, such as the fact that the government wants to make it so that people have to spend three consecutive years in Canada to get their citizenship. For one thing, this would limit their right to move. What happens if someone wants to spend a week in Cuba? They blow their three consecutive years.

I am open to considering my colleague's amendments. I doubt that the three consecutive years requirement would stand up in court. However, there could be another way forward. We will study the matter together in committee and call in experts to tell us what is and is not feasible.

As I said, I am open to considering the amendments. Once they are tabled, we will examine them thoroughly and work as we always do, in a respectful way.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague described the situation well. The government acknowledges that its immigration department has some very serious problems and that the public no longer has confidence in the immigration system. It even mentioned this in its own throne speech.

What is happening this morning, at the beginning of this new Parliament? The government is recycling. It thinks the public will start having confidence in it if it passes a bill. I am not saying that the bill is bad or unimportant, just that it fails to address the root of the problem. There have been seven immigration ministers in 10 years, and the same party has been in power for the last 10 years.

My colleague is very familiar with the immigration file. Can he tell me whether he truly thinks that the public will start having confidence in the immigration system again because of minor changes like the ones put forward in Bill C-3?

• (1140)

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, obviously, this is not the most urgent priority. As I mentioned earlier, over the past 10 years, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration has been the most dysfunctional department in the federal government.

There have been seven immigration ministers in 10 years. When a ship is sinking, changing captains is not going to help. A new ship must be built. The problems with immigration are systemic. In 2022, the immigration minister announced with great fanfare an \$85-million investment in his department to hire staff. In December 2024, he cut 3,300 jobs in his department. That is how he was managing the immigration system.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed working with my colleague at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

This is not the first time that this type of bill has been before the House. We were able to work together on the second iteration of Bill C-71. I have really enjoyed working with him.

I would like to give my colleague the opportunity to explain why it is important to keep the promise that we made to the families that we met at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. We had discussions with a number of families, some of whom are from Quebec. They want to see progress. They told us how important it is to avoid introducing amendments that will slow things down and said that it is time to pass this bill.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, if there are good amendments, I will consider them and support them. If they are bad, I will consider them and not support them. That is pretty much it.

This should not have dragged on since 2009, however. The Liberals were a majority from 2015 to 2019. They could have fixed this mistake promptly. Sadly, however, they made no effort whatsoever to address this injustice.

Today, they are pleased to introduce this bill, and I can understand why. Still, why did it take them more than 15 years to correct such a ridiculous mistake? It was a blatant injustice, yet it took them 15 years to make it right. When the time comes to reform the asylum seeker system, how long is that going to take? That is the problem at the moment with the Liberal government and its way of managing the immigration system.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean on his speech. Everyone who knows him and has had the opportunity to work with him knows that he is an extremely thorough individual who is capable of working across party lines in the best interests of the issues that he is working on. Immigration is something that is very important to him.

After the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's speech, I asked her a question about the temporary foreign worker program. My colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean made the point that the government has implemented one-size-fits-all measures across Canada without taking into account regional realities.

The result is that, right now, families of temporary foreign workers, who are well integrated back home in Drummondville, are not able to get their permits renewed because of these measures. All of these measures are very confusing. The responsibility sharing between Quebec and Ottawa is not working very well.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks we should do about this issue.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, we put forward proposals regarding temporary foreign workers and the measures that were implemented last fall. We asked for the government to restore the previous measures, for example, to allow Quebec companies to hire up to 20% of their workforce as temporary foreign workers, except in Montreal and Laval.

That is what we mean when we talk about unilateral measures. The problem is that the government always uses a bazooka instead of a scalpel when it comes to immigration. To that end, the Bloc Québécois has good suggestions that are in keeping with the reality of entrepreneurs, newcomers and foreign workers, which is the most important thing.

I am asking the government to listen to us. We are here to work, co-operate and make constructive suggestions. We hope that the government will listen, but not just to us. I hope that it will also listen to foreign workers and entrepreneurs from every region in Quebec.

• (1145)

[English]

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too worked well with my hon. colleague on the immigration committee in previous Parliaments.

With this particular bill, Bill C-3, which is substantively the same as Bill C-71, Canada will finally be charter-compliant with the gender discrimination components of the Citizenship Act. Is that not something we should actually act on?

On the question around substantial connections, there are provisions in the bill that speak to substantial connections. To his point that people actually—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member to give the member for Lac-Saint-Jean the time to respond.

[Translation]

The member for Lac-Saint-Jean has 30 seconds to respond.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, we unfortunately did not have time to hear the entire question.

All we can say is that Bill C-3 will correct an injustice once and for all. The amendments from Bill C-71 are already included in Bill C-3. In fact, it is as though we were passing Bill C-71 without the parliamentary obstruction that took place at the time.

I think that now is the time to do it.

[English]

Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this 45th Parliament to speak about Bill C-3 and the transformative power of Canadian citizenship. At its heart, this bill is about people, real families, their histories, their sacrifices and their deep and abiding connection to Canada, no matter where their careers or lives may take them.

Many Canadians live and work abroad, in international development, arts and sciences, education, the humanitarian sector or global business, just to name a few. These citizens maintain deep links to Canada, often returning to raise their children, care for loved ones and build new communities. Ensuring that their children, whether born or adopted abroad, can share in that identity is not just about fairness; it strengthens our country's cohesion and global outreach.

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[Translation]

I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-3. I would also like to sincerely thank all those who spoke before me to defend the rights of Canadians affected by the previous amendments to the Citizenship Act.

This bill represents a new and important step toward more inclusive citizenship. All members of the House recognize what a privilege it is to have Canadian citizenship and how proud we can be of that. From our majestic landscapes and the richness of our diversity to the shared values that bring us together, being Canadian means being part of something profoundly meaningful. Values such as inclusion, respect for human rights, environmental stewardship and peacekeeping are an integral part of our society and influence our policies, our culture, and the daily lives of every Canadian.

Canada is recognized around the world for its open-mindedness and its commitment to multiculturalism. Since the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed in 1988, we have strengthened those principles at the core of our institutions. Canada's approach to multiculturalism emphasizes the active integration and celebration of Canadians' diverse cultural identities. This approach has created a society in which people of different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds can maintain their identity, be proud of their roots and feel at home. It can be seen across the country; communities from coast to coast to coast reflect this diversity and are proud of it.

Our commitment to human rights is at the heart of who we are as Canadians. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the fundamental rights we share as a society: freedom of expression, association and religion; equality before the law; protection against discrimination, and the list goes on.

This commitment is also evident in international efforts. Whether standing up for the rights of women, LGBTQ people or people in a vulnerable situation, Canada plays an active role.

Our immigration policies and measures to protect refugees also reflect these values. Canadians also care deeply about protecting our environment. Our natural landscapes remind us of this responsibility, from the Atlantic coast in the east to the mountains in the west to the Arctic in the north. We know that this desire to preserve nature is essential for future generations. These values are reflected in our environmental policies and initiatives aimed at fighting climate change, preserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable development. Our country has made significant progress in promoting renewable energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting conservation efforts.

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● (1150)

Canada is also known as a peaceful country thanks to its history of peacekeeping and international co-operation. Since the Second World War, Canada has played an active role in peacekeeping missions. Our forces have participated in a number of UN-led international missions, thereby strengthening our reputation as a committed and trustworthy country. Our commitment to peacekeeping reflects our core values of diplomacy, conflict resolution and humanism. Canadian soldiers have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping missions around the world to help protect conflict-affected populations.

Canada's foreign policy also emphasizes international co-operation, development assistance and support for institutions such as the United Nations and NATO.

Social justice and equity also define Canadian society. Our commitment is clear. We are working to narrow social gaps and ensure that everyone has access to essential services such as health care, education and a reliable social safety net. Canada's universal health care system, public education system and social assistance programs are designed to promote the well-being of Canadians and give everyone a fair chance.

Building stronger relationships also means recognizing our shared history, including its most painful chapters. The government is continuing to work on reconciliation by responding to the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report. In partnership with indigenous communities, we are building an inclusive country founded on dignity, truth and shared pride. These are the principles that define who we are as Canadians today. By guiding our policies and influencing the way we live together, these values allow us to build an inclusive and equitable society committed to both its citizens and the world around us.

Citizenship provides access to security, rights and obligations, and opportunities. It helps people feel fully included in Canadian society and actively participate in it. It has many benefits that make life better for individuals and for communities.

One of those advantages is the fundamental right to actively participate in the country's democratic process. This includes the right to vote in federal, provincial, territorial and municipal elections, which empowers citizens to have a direct impact on government policy. It is also important to note that only citizens can run for office, giving them the opportunity to represent their communities and contribute to the governance of Canada. All Canadian citizens also enjoy all the legal protections and rights set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This ensures that their civil liberties and rights as individuals are protected at the highest level, in addition to providing a solid framework for justice and equality.

Another important advantage of Canadian citizenship is access to the Canadian passport. This passport is recognized worldwide as one of the most valuable and offers visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to many countries. Canadian citizens also benefit from consular assistance abroad, particularly in emergencies or situations of political unrest, ensuring they are supported wherever they travel since the Canadian passport is respected worldwide.

Canadian citizenship also offers security and peace of mind. Unlike permanent residency, which can be lost if residency requirements are not met, citizenship cannot be revoked unless it was obtained fraudulently.

● (1155)

Canadian citizens can access employment opportunities across the country. They can apply for any job, including those that require a high security clearance or those that are reserved exclusively for citizens, such as in the public service. They are also free to work in any province or territory without restrictions. Citizenship also opens the door to many educational benefits. Citizens can receive certain scholarships, grants or other forms of financial assistance that are not available to permanent residents. Many institutions also charge lower tuition to citizens, which makes post-secondary education more affordable and more accessible.

Canadian citizenship is recognized worldwide for its many advantages, including the ability to travel, work or live abroad. Canada also allows dual citizenship, meaning that citizens can keep their Canadian citizenship when they are a citizen of another country, which gives them more options abroad. Citizenship helps people continue to support loved ones and bring family members to Canada. For example, people can apply to sponsor their parents and grandparents. Citizenship plays an important role in family reunification and strengthens communities across the country. It fosters a deeper sense of belonging and national identity. Canadian citizens are fully integrated into our society and culture, making it easier for them to get involved in their local community and civic activities, and contribute to societal development. Their sense of belonging strengthens the country's social fabric.

Canadian citizenship is not just a symbol. It has a real impact on a person's life, rights and opportunities. Our goal is to have a fair, transparent and accessible citizenship system for everyone who is entitled to it. That is why we must pass the Citizenship Act and restore citizenship to those who lost it or never obtained it. In 2009, amendments to the Citizenship Act limited citizenship by descent to the first generation, meaning that a parent who is a Canadian citizen can pass citizenship to a child born abroad if the parent was born in Canada or naturalized before the child was born. Because passing on citizenship by descent is limited to the first generation, a Canadian citizen born abroad to a parent who was also born abroad cannot pass citizenship to their child born outside Canada. They also cannot apply for citizenship for a child they adopted abroad beyond the first generation. Bill C-3 will allow access to citizenship by descent beyond the first generation, in a spirit of inclusiveness and respect for citizenship.

Bill C-3 will restore citizenship to those we call lost Canadians, individuals who either were never able to become citizens or who lost their citizenship due to outdated provisions of former citizenship legislation. Although the government has already implemented measures to remedy the situation for most lost Canadians, some individuals are still affected. These changes seek to resolve the issues of lost Canadians and their descendants. Among other things, the amendments address the situation of Canadian descendants affected by the first-generation limit.

● (1200)

The bill also provides clear guidelines for obtaining Canadian citizenship by descent. Once the bill is passed, Canadian citizens born abroad will be able to pass on their citizenship to their children born abroad beyond the first generation if they can prove that they have a substantial connection to Canada. If a Canadian parent born abroad has spent at least three cumulative years in Canada before the birth of their child, they will be able to pass on their citizenship to that child.

We also want to continue to reduce disparities between children born abroad and adopted by Canadians and children born abroad to Canadian parents. Any child adopted abroad by a Canadian parent before the bill comes into force will be eligible for direct citizenship for adoptees, even if they were previously excluded due to the first-generation limit. For children born abroad and adopted by Canadian citizens, when the bill comes into force, if the adoptive parent, who was born abroad, can prove substantial ties to Canada prior to the adoption, direct citizenship may be requested for the adopted child.

In short, Bill C-3 will restore citizenship to those who have been denied it and provide a fair and consistent framework for citizenship by descent. Building on the progress made by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and the Senate through former Bill S-245, these amendments further refine the proposed changes and comprehensively address the concerns raised by the courts.

Filibustering slowed the progress of Bill S-245 and Bill C-71, making it even more clear that Bill C-3 is essential and must move forward without unnecessary delay. As a pillar of our identity, Canadian citizenship unites us around fundamental values of democracy, inclusion and equality. This bill strengthens our legislation to ensure fair rights and equal opportunities for all.

[English]

As a government, we must remain vigilant in ensuring that Canadian citizenship remains a beacon of and a commitment to inclusivity, fairness and security. That is why we have introduced Bill C-3: to ensure that access to citizenship remains fair and transparent.

At a time when misinformation and division can threaten confidence in public institutions, Canada must show that its commitment to fairness extends across borders. Providing thoughtful, inclusive pathways to citizenship beyond the first generation affirms that Canadian identity is shaped not only by place of birth, but also by connection, contribution and values. The government's role is not only to protect the rights of Canadian citizens, but also to provide

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clarity on the citizenship process and to enact legislation that reflects the values of equality, inclusivity and justice.

● (1205)

[Translation]

I urge all parties in the House to support this very important piece of legislation.

[English]

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech, and it honestly sounded like most of it was written by the government PR department. It was something I might have heard on a reel in EPCOT Center at the Canada Pavilion, although there was some discussion about Bill C-3.

When this was at committee last, Conservatives asked many questions about how many people it would potentially give citizenship to, and we had trouble getting a number from the government. I wonder if the member can enlighten us on how many people this bill would affect and how many new citizens it would create. If she does not have a number, I would ask if she thinks it makes sense to create a new citizenship bill without actually knowing how it is going to impact Canada.

Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the premise of my colleague's words or his question. What I said in my speech is a matter of pride. I am showcasing what Canada is, what Canada stands for and who we are as a people. No, it was not an EPCOT reel, and I do not have a number.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for talking about preserving the institutions of Canada that we all believe in and that protect the rights of Canadians. Maybe my hon. colleague can expand on the fact that this bill really does go to the foundations of our institutions that we uphold and that are there to protect Canadians, and would make sure that if a soldier went to serve Canada in another country, their children's children should not have to worry about ever losing their citizenship from a parent who served our country.

Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's deep question, and this is what I was talking about in my speech: the pride we have as Canadians in serving other nations, in our humanity toward others, and in expressing that humanity and bringing, or trying to bring, justice and peace to those regions afflicted by conflicts.

There are people who work on an international level, and it could be multi-generational. This kind of proposed legislation helps those people who are out there serving the world, representing Canada, to not be fearful for their security and the security of their future generations.

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Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Superior Court ruling that ostensibly was the genesis of this legislation said it was unconstitutional for Canada to deny automatic citizenship to children born abroad to parents who were also born overseas but have a substantial connection to Canada.

Could my colleague describe what her government believes “substantial connection to Canada” means, and where that is contained in the bill?

Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that significant question. As I cited in my speech as an example, if a parent was born outside of Canada and has lived in Canada for three years cumulatively, this would be one of those scenarios where we can provide that kind of citizenship to a future generation with a parental affiliation.

• (1210)

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was interesting because, again, I do not think it addressed the bill at all.

The big question we have here is this. Every expert has looked at the number of people this might open Canadian citizenship to as more or less a free pass. If the member cannot arrive at some number here about how many people we are inviting in for Canadian citizenship, then the bill is moot because Canadians do not understand what this is. If the Liberals are going to fill a hole that is necessary, and that might impact 100 Canadians who should be Canadians, by letting in more than 100,000 Canadians to have Canadian citizenship, then I am going to suggest that, potentially, they are taking the wrong approach.

Would my colleague across the way endeavour to look at the numbers that would be impacted by this bill, and will she come back to the House with that estimation at some point in time?

Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, to my colleague who wants numbers, I am sure the Conservatives will come up with some, but I will give him some numbers.

In 2009 and 2015, approximately 20,000 people known as lost Canadians were able to acquire citizenship. That is 2009 and 2015. In seven years, there were 20,000 people who obtained it, not hundreds of thousands as the colleagues across the way keep trying to insinuate. There is just a small group of people, it seems, who are left in this situation. This situation does need to be remedied, because those who are working abroad, who work internationally and who serve, as I have mentioned, Canada and what Canada stands for need that security and peace of mind for their service and their dedication to our country as well.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that we did just hear a number from the member. That is great. I have heard that number before, in relation to just one segment of the bill. However, I do not believe the main part of the bill, which is the citizenship by descent for generation after generation, is covered by that number. We have heard estimates of hundreds of thousands of people. If we do not get numbers from the government, then how are we supposed to know?

Can the member provide the number of how many people will be impacted by citizenship by descent? Will the government be providing that information for committee when we get to that work?

Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, this is a work in progress. Something needs to come up, and it will. I hope we will get some numbers. However, as I mentioned, in seven or eight years, it was only 20,000. There is just a small group left, and we hope to cover those people as well.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, just on that point about the 20,000 Canadians who have been able to receive citizenship through this program, and the leftover Canadians, many people have applied to be part of these lost Canadians to receive their citizenship. The IRCC has been working to make sure it is only people who are considered lost Canadians who have been able to receive this grant of citizenship.

Maybe the member could talk about the meticulous work that goes into making sure we are paying attention to who is applying and we are giving it to people who merit it.

Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is entirely accurate in saying that IRCC does treat these cases case by case and not through blanket approval. Everything will be looked at. As to the number, I know the members across the way are trying to insinuate that hundreds of thousands of people are going to come and flood Canada. I have repeated that this is very specific legislation.

In the eight-year gap between 2009 until 2015, only 20,000 people asked for such provisions. To try to frighten people or discourage them from working internationally or representing Canada or being part of the armed forces does not serve Canada, Canadians or the world, and our commitments, in any way.

• (1215)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, what we have heard the member say in responding to questions is that she did not have a number, but then did have a number, but did not, and that it might be 100,000, which is small, but that it might also be 20,000 or maybe a dozen.

The point here is that the Liberals are essentially, with this bill, enabling endless chain migration with no consecutive residency requirement, which actually devalues Canadian citizenship. The PBO said it would be over 100,000 people in five years.

Why has the bill been presented in this way?

Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned many, many times, in eight years only 20,000 people applied. It is for people who have applied. Not everybody is going to apply. That is what we need to look at. We do not know what people's intentions are or what they plan on doing. We just know that for people who apply, it will be looked at case by case.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are here debating a bill today that the Liberals have proposed, which would give endless chain migration, the ability to pass down citizenship *ad infinitum*, to anybody. We just heard a speech, for those who are tuning in, that shows why this bill is so poorly designed.

A member from the Liberal Party stood up and, over and over again in questions and answers, which will be interesting to watch back, did not know how many people this would apply to in the future. At a time in Canadian history when we are talking about what the value of Canadian citizenship should mean, that the Liberal government has proposed such a reckless bill without really thinking through the implications really speaks to the utter disarray and brokenness of a decade of Liberal failure in Canada's immigration system.

The consensus on immigration used to be universal. It used to be a non-partisan understanding that immigration was a good thing and that numbers should be set in accordance with Canada's capacity to do things like house newcomers, provide them with jobs, let them start businesses or have health care. Now we know, based on public opinion polling, most Canadians realize the truth: We are in a jobs crisis, we are in a health care crisis, and we are also in a housing crisis.

Because the Liberals have increased immigration to such unsustainable levels, they are the ones who broke the consensus on immigration. Instead of fixing those issues, instead of listening to the concerns of Canadians, they tabled an ill-thought-out bill that would enable intergenerational, without limit, chain migration without any consecutive residency requirements, any substantial presence in Canada. That is just so wrong and irresponsible.

I am going to tell members what happened with this bill. This is what I suspect happened, because Liberals have come to talk to me privately about how incompetent they think the Liberal immigration minister is. They are shocked, and rightly so, that the Prime Minister would put someone so remarkably incompetent in that role on such an important file.

Let me give proof of how incompetent the immigration minister is. She was an immigration minister for eight years in Nova Scotia, and during that period of time, audits showed massive failures in vetting and setting levels and no response to Auditor General recommendations. She even said there should be no limits on immigration into her province. She said it in a CBC interview. She said there should be no limits, no caps.

Now the Liberals have put that minister in here, and if anybody has been watching her performance in the House, it has been abysmal. She does not understand basic numbers on how many people are coming in and did not really have a grasp on how many people were leaving the country who were supposed to. Now she has tabled this bill.

This is what I think happened. We have an incompetent minister who has to deal with this issue. There was a court ruling that the government chose not to appeal and needed to address somehow. Rather than take an approach proposed by a Conservative member from the other place, which had a tight, narrowly defined solution

that would have addressed the court ruling, the Liberals teamed up with a far left, now independent, member of this place to utterly gut that bill and extend Canadian citizenship, turning it almost into a low-grade frequent flyer program. It is basically like someone would need to scan once every five years to get their loyalty program. That is really what this bill is.

A competent minister would have taken all stakeholder concerns and said that for the few people to whom the lost Canadian ruling applied, we should have a tight, narrowly defined bill to address it. That is what the minister should have done. She should have listened to the stakeholder feedback and endless debate in the previous immigration committee and fixed the bill such that it could have been something that could be passed through the House.

Instead, I do not even think the minister read the bill, to be honest. I think she probably took a memorandum to cabinet with whatever the department gave to her and said, "Just table the same thing." That is what she did. I bet if we had the ability to question her at length, she could not go through the provisions of this bill. To me, that is not responsible government, given the impact of this bill, so let us talk about what this bill would do, because it is really important for Canadians.

● (1220)

With what colleagues opposite in the Liberal Party have been putting up in debate today, we can tell by their answers that they do not understand what the bill does either. They are going to just blindly vote for it without thinking through the enormous, non-partisan concerns that the bill would create for the value of Canadian citizenship.

Essentially, the bill would eliminate something called the "first-generation limit". This was a provision that was put in place by a previous, Conservative government to put restrictions on how Canadian citizenship could be automatically passed down to people who do not live in Canada anymore, for the most part. For colleagues who want a little history lesson, this was precipitated by a situation that happened roughly 15 years ago, during the conflict in Lebanon, when there were what we would refer to as "Canadians of convenience", or people who had no substantive ties to the country who all of a sudden claimed Canadian citizenship so that the Government of Canada would be obligated to evacuate them. At that time, that initiative, in 2006, cost the Canadian taxpayer almost \$100 million, plus endless other ancillary benefits. Most of these people, the vast majority, had no ties to Canada at all. Most of them left and went back almost immediately thereafter. This raised serious questions.

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It is tough to talk about conflict, but in this place we have to talk about what the obligations of the Government of Canada are to people who do not have substantive ties to Canada and then claim citizenship. To be clear to anybody watching this, I am not talking about the small number of people for whom the first-generation limit that was imposed affected. This is why a Conservative member from the other place did the job of the government for it in the last Parliament and tabled a private member's bill to close that loophole. We support those provisions. It is why a Conservative member from the other place put them forward. However, a now independent member, who lost party status in the last election, worked with the government to completely gut that bill and turn it into a chain migration bill, which is what we have here today, and that is not right.

We need to have a conversation in this country about the responsibilities of Canadian citizenship, and the minister started her speech with those words, saying there are rights and responsibilities to Canadian citizenship. However, her speech was entirely about the rights and failed on the responsibilities, and that is why the Liberal approach to immigration has been so broken.

Even on a macro level, members will remember the mantra of the last decade: Canada is a postnational state with no identity. Well, if we are a postnational state with no identity, what does Canadian citizenship mean? If we are tabling bills that would allow people with no substantial connection to Canada to, ad nauseam, forever and ever, pass on citizenship with no ties to this country, then that denigrates every person, including people who have immigrated to Canada and become citizens, started businesses here, worked as health care workers, paid taxes and become part of our Canadian pluralism. It denigrates citizenship for us all; it denigrates identity for us all. The beauty of our country, of course, is our pluralism, and it has saddened me as a Canadian to watch people across the country, Liberal, Conservative and NDP alike, lose faith in the value of immigration to Canada. Again, it is because the Liberal government has focused entirely on some sort of false, broken understanding of the rights of Canadian citizenship and has done nothing about the responsibilities.

Let us talk about the responsibilities. In the bill, there would be absolutely no requirement for somebody to live in Canada over consecutive days in order to receive Canadian citizenship. Practically, for a person living abroad, the bill would make it so that a great-great-great-great-great-grandma in the future, or somewhere in a person's ancestry chain, somewhere in their family tree, someone had Canadian citizenship, and then, sometime over their entire life period, they would only need to spend slightly over 1,000 days in Canada. It could be over 70 years, it could be over 80 years, but sometime, not consecutively, they just need to spend that amount of time in Canada, and then they would get Canadian citizenship.

• (1225)

We have to start talking about the rights that these people would then obtain. Practically, they would be able to get access to the Canadian health care system. Right now, Canada does not have any obligation even for countries that have tax treaties for people to file taxes when they have a citizenship situation like that. I am not talking about double taxation here. They would not have any obliga-

tion, in their responsibilities as a Canadian with citizenship, to pay for those services.

That is the way the bill is written right now. That is what it functionally means. Part of the problem in this place, sometimes, is that people have to think about what a bill would mean in 10, 15, 20 or 25 years.

Let us talk about how many people this could impact. In debate today, over and over, Conservative colleagues brought up the fact that in the last Parliament, for months, we tried to find out how many people this could impact. The now independent member, formerly NDP, lost massively in the last election because of policies like what this bill would support.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I am being heckled. Members are saying, "Well, the NDP is not in government." I do not know why the Liberals would just support their bill. It is completely strange.

Here is the thing: We do not know how many people the bill would affect. The government could not say, over a 10-, 20- or 30-year period, how many people would be able to draw health care benefits in Canada, draw on the services of our country.

We asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Again, he was kind of stonewalled in his analysis on the government, because I do not think it wants the public to know. I think the government knows how many people this could impact. Earlier my colleague said there is about four million people currently living abroad that have Canadian citizenship. We could start thinking about the exponential downstream impact the bill would have. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that at a minimum it is going to be 100,000 people over five years. That is his best guess.

Why would the Liberals propose a bill that would essentially allow mass chain migration to this country through automatic Canadian citizenship without any sort of substantive tie to the country? It really does speak to motive. Why are they doing this? They could have kept the Conservative bill with just a minimal scope, but no. They did this on purpose, and they have now done it twice. Instead of making amendments to the bill as were required, they have now done this twice.

There are two things that are missing in the bill that absolutely, 100%, need to be instantly changed. The first is that missing requirement of a substantial connection to Canada. I mentioned, in questions and answers, that the court ruling some of this applied to, which the Conservative bill and not the government tried to address, had a requirement or a definition for a substantial connection to Canada. How have the Liberals defined that? There is nothing. We heard that in the non-answer of the colleague who spoke just before. She could not really define that.

What we need is a substantial connection to Canada. Precedent for this type of situation in virtually every other country around the world is something like five or 10 years in a set period of time. Earlier my colleague from the Bloc asked if it would stop somebody from leaving Canada. It is usually five or more years within seven years, and at least a chunk of that is spent in the country as an adult, over the age of 14 or over the age of 16. That point was brought up in the hours of debate, with witness after witness giving testimony in the last Parliament.

The Liberals could have harmonized that with other jurisdictions around the world, but instead they purposefully tabled a bill with that missing. I think that they did that because, again, they want to have a devaluation of the Canadian citizenship. Let us think about it; it is literally like devaluing currency. If they want to refute me on this point, this should be their response: It should be that they will entertain an amendment to have a consecutive residency requirement, as a bare minimum amendment. That is what I think. That makes sense to me.

• (1230)

The second thing that the bill absolutely needs amended is the fact that there is no security vetting requirement whatsoever for somebody applying for this. Let us think about what that means. If somebody looks up their ancestral food chain and finds an ancestor who held Canadian citizenship, even though that person has never been in the country, they could come, three years over some period of the course of their life, and then be granted Canadian citizenship without having been vetted for any sort of security risk whatsoever. There is an automatic get-into-Canada pass with the bill, and that is not right.

I want to talk about fairness too because there are millions and millions of positive stories. Many people who now work and serve other Canadians in this place have migrated to Canada, played by the rules and played fair through Canada's immigration system. They checked all the boxes, waited for years, had security tests and had all of these different tests. I cannot imagine how they feel looking at this bill. It is not right, and it is not fair.

Again, I want to be very clear: I think one of the things that Canadians have always been proud of, and are proud of and open to today, is the concept of immigration that functions within the context of the pluralism of Canada. That does not work under what the Liberal government has done, which is increase immigration to a level that is so unsustainable that we do not have houses, we do not have health care and we do not have jobs to adequately address everybody in the country, newcomer or not.

I think what has happened here is the Liberals have tabled the bill without amendments, partially because of an incompetent min-

ister. However, they have also put the bill forward without amendments because they put Bill C-2 in place. They broke Canada's asylum system so badly that they had to put the immigration provisions of Bill C-2 in there. That is another debate. I will have a lot to say on that in the future.

There are people, "consultants" in loose quotations, who have made an entire industry of scamming people who want to come to Canada to build a better life. I think the Liberals are afraid to stand up to those people. I think what they try to do is talk out of both sides of their mouth on this issue. That is why the bill came in unamended.

If the Liberals had come in with a bill with a narrow scope that looked a lot like our colleague's bill from the other place, in which she had very tight definitions to address the very real needs of some of the stakeholders who are considered lost Canadians, everybody could have supported that. It would have been fast-tracked. However, the Liberals and the former NDP members stalled the bill at committee because they gutted it and then made it this endless chain migration bill.

I need to hear from the government that it is going to amend the bill so that there is a substantive presence test that includes some sort of consecutive presence, as well as, at a minimum, security vetting for people this would apply to. The government has not signalled that, and every Canadian should be asking why. Conservatives will continue to press the Liberals on this issue because we will not let Canadian citizenship be devalued by poor Liberal legislation and the poor Liberal broken immigration system.

• (1235)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the results of the election are that the Liberal Party is back in government, and the former leader of the opposition did not make it back into the House of Commons.

I heard a lot about the spirit in which the Conservative Party was dividing Canadians. I just listened to the member degrade and speak with ill intent toward our members who have been speaking to Canadians, speaking to the people who send them to this House.

Can the member speak to how we can work, as members of this House, to better serve Canadians, with the understanding that the Conservatives did not come into government, because of the way they were treating Canadians?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to do that. In fact, I would speak to her boss, the Prime Minister, who appointed her as the House leader when the House was not sitting and then demoted her.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my Conservative colleague for her speech and for her strong convictions on this issue. We will not always agree on all the measures to be taken or on the entirety of a bill. However, it seems to me that in the case of this bill, everyone had pretty much agreed to finish with this measure, which has already been studied several times in previous versions of similar bills from the Senate and the House.

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Does my colleague not think that we have much more pressing issues to deal with besides bills that we already debated in the previous Parliament? Should we not instead focus on everything that is wrong with the immigration department and try to do everything we can to fix it?

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I refuse to accept that in order to litigate and hold the government to account for its endless failures in the immigration system, the House should have to accept a bill that is so deeply flawed as this and that extremely denigrates the value of Canadian citizenship.

I agree with my Bloc colleague. I cannot wait to work with his colleague, who is the spokesperson for the immigration committee, and perhaps himself, to litigate the government on its failures. Giddy up, we are going to do it.

At the same time, I hope my Bloc colleague would work collaboratively to come up with amendments that at least both of our parties can agree on. On the consecutive residency requirement, I heard my colleague from the Bloc earlier say he was worried about people being able to travel. I am sure we can address that, but also vetting requirements.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that very thorough and thoughtful presentation she did on the inefficiencies of Bill C-3, which the government is trying to ram through.

How is it fair to legitimate immigrants who spend their entire lives contributing to this country when the government is ready to give citizenship away to people who have never actually lived here?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, it is not fair. If the government was serious about addressing that point, it would have tabled a bill that had some sort of consecutive residency requirement. I do not think that is asking for much, particularly since that is international best practice.

I do think that if the government was willing to accept an amendment to that point, it would solve all the problems. It would solve my Bloc colleague's problem about wanting to get on with the show. It would show the Canadian public that the House is serious about retaining the value of Canadian citizenship and not causing problems like what we were seeing without the first-generation limit. It would show some modicum of seriousness by the government to fix the immigration system it has so clearly broken.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am curious to know and I really do want to know how we can make the House function better and work together better, because that is what Canadians want from us. They want their members of Parliament to speak to each other like members of Parliament and find ways to work together.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, they should not table junky legislation. They should go to the immigration minister and say there was literally months and months of testimony that could have been included in this bill. She just pulled it off the shelf and then expected us to take it. This is not acceptable.

I will never back down on my responsibility to hold the government to account on behalf of my constituents. I know people do not like hearing it, but that is why I am paid to be here. This is what close to 60% of the good people of Calgary Nose Hill voted for on April 28: me standing here holding the government to account.

If the Liberals want to work collaboratively, they should not table junky legislation. It is easy.

• (1240)

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to contribute to the discussion of this bill, and I thank the shadow minister.

I am an immigrant to Canada. We immigrated in 1995 as landed immigrants. In the year 2000, I was blessed with the gift of Canadian citizenship. I remember that day, when my entire family went to St. Clair and Yonge and we took our oath of citizenship before a judge.

This is something I find to be so incredibly valuable, such a gift to so many Canadians. Now, what we see from the Liberal government is an attempt to essentially devalue, dilute Canadian citizenship.

Would the shadow minister be so kind as to explain to folks at home how this bill actually dilutes and devalues Canadian citizenship?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, regardless of political stripe, I am so glad and blessed that I get to work with people who chose Canada and came to Canada and migrated to Canada and that we have a diversity of perspectives in the House, but the value of Canadian citizenship should not be debased with bills like this.

Did members know that the government eliminated the need for in-person citizenship ceremonies? One does not even need to go and gather with a group of people to get Canadian citizenship anymore. It is these measures that the government needs to get serious about. We are having a moment when the government needs to lead beyond whatever it is talking about in terms of economic measures and really atone for the fact that it said we were a postnational state with no identity and supported the desecration of Canadian national symbols.

We have to get our act together, and it starts by amending this bill.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member is aware that the Ontario Superior Court made a decision that ultimately led to the legislation we have before us today.

The Conservatives like to talk tough. Pierre Poilievre is out there talking about all sorts of restrictions in terms of new immigrants even coming to Canada.

I am wondering if the member is being influenced by the far right in regard to immigration policy and citizenship policy. Can she indicate to the House to what degree the far right is now influencing immigration and citizenship policy here in the House of Commons?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, what an embarrassment that comment was. It was actually beneath any person in this place, given the severity of the confidence crisis that people are having in Canada on immigration, which has been perpetuated by the Liberal government.

Before the member's question, his colleague asked a salient question about how we can make this place work. I would ask her to ask the question of that member, who has a reputation for making inane, thoughtless, completely irrelevant statements. I wish he would have asked me about an amendment to this bill. I wish he would have asked me about something productive, but instead he debased himself, just as the Liberal government debases itself with this legislation.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke, in her awesome speech, about the fact that the government has no numbers. It got me thinking about the impact this has on the system in Canada. For example, all of us know that it takes a long time to get things through the immigration department. It has been plagued by a big backlog and delays. There are also other ways in which I could see new citizens impacting Canada, for example with old age security.

Could the member comment on some of the impacts that hundreds of thousands of new citizens might have on the costs in our government?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I wish I could answer that with data that showed how many people would come in under this. Would that not be nice? However, the government does not have that information. How can it go to the provinces and say that it is going to cost them x amount of dollars in health care over x period of time, that it is going to cost them x amount in social services benefits or other types of social payments, or that it is going to impact the number of jobs or the future levels?

It cannot do that, and that is why it failed in the immigration system. The government has treated the immigration ministry like the arm pit of cabinet. It has had—

• (1245)

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill C-3. I will be splitting my time with the member for London West.

I stand here proudly as the member for Ottawa Centre and somebody who has gone through the immigration process, somebody who is a very proud Canadian, somebody who has taken the oath of citizenship and actually has participated in hundreds of citizenship ceremonies, because I once ran an organization called the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. I come to this debate with both a personal

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experience on this issue, a lived experience as a proud Canadian, and also a professional and legal understanding.

I think it is extremely important for Canadians, who may be listening intently to this debate, to understand what issue we are trying to resolve and how we got around to having this issue. This issue comes from a problem that was created by the Harper government, a problem that did not exist except for the fact that the Harper government, at a moment in time when it was all into taking away people's rights and was really interested in multiple classes of citizens, chose to bring a piece of legislation that took away the right of Canadian citizens to pass their citizenship on to their children.

This was at the same time, by the way, when the Harper government was doing things like the niqab ban, which was also struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional, against the charter. This was at the same time when the Harper government tried to introduce a snitch line so that people could snitch on their neighbours if they felt that their values did not meet "Canadian values", however we define that. Canadians, in the 2015 election, took care of that by saying that it is not our Canadian values to rat on our neighbours.

That is the history of this bill. I am hearing my Conservative colleagues, the hon. members on the other side, try to spin this thing left, right and centre, but the fact of the matter is that Bill C-3 exists in its current incarnation because the Harper government brought an unconstitutional piece of law that now the courts right here in the province of Ontario have deemed in violation of the charter. The government is simply fixing a problem the Conservatives created. I find it a bit rich, at times, when they are trying to ascribe some sort of blame to the government side, which is just trying to clean up the mess that the Conservatives left behind.

I do want to get into the substantive element as to why this legislation is important and why it is drafted in the manner it is. The Conservatives are trying to make the argument that the floodgates will open and millions of people out of nowhere will automatically become Canadian citizens, when they do not have any data to support whether that assertion is even close to true. Let us not try to obscure this debate by making arguments that may not even have a basis.

Let me give a precise example of a person I know whom I have been trying to help. This is a person I have known, personally, for a long time, who has been impacted by the unconstitutional—

The Deputy Speaker: I have a point of order from the member for Dufferin—Caledon.

Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, I am just wondering if the member is going to take some time in his speech to apologize to the member for Battle River—Crowfoot for interrupting his speech in Parliament yesterday, when he was—

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

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Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are rattled by me right now because I am trying to talk substantively about the bill. They would rather debate things that are fictional in nature, so they will raise a point of order that is not a point of order. Fine, that is fair enough.

I will go back. I have limited time, Mr. Speaker—

• (1250)

The Deputy Speaker: I have another point of order from the member for Dufferin—Caledon.

Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, his interruption of the member for Battle River—Crowfoot was not fictional. He just suggested that I was making up fiction. He actually did interrupt him. My question was whether or not he is going to apologize—

The Deputy Speaker: Again, this is not a point of order. This is a matter of debate. I also believe that the Speaker has already indicated that the seat for Battle River—Crowfoot was vacated.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, let me get to the crux of the matter. I am sharing a real-life example of a family that has been impacted by an unconstitutional law the Harper government brought in.

I have a good friend, somebody I have known for a long time and somebody I have been trying to help, whose parents immigrated to Canada, became Canadian citizens, worked hard in this country in pursuit of their professional obligations and left the country to work elsewhere. They had a child while they were Canadian citizens abroad. That child, the person I am helping in this matter, later on came back to Canada and went to school here. That is how I met her. She became a lawyer. She lived and worked here, and now she is living in France, where she got married. She is a Canadian citizen, and now she has two beautiful daughters from that marriage.

She is unable to pass on her Canadian citizenship because of the unconstitutional law the Harper government brought in. She was part of a group of people who challenged that law, which the Ontario Superior Court deemed unconstitutional. Unless and until we fix that grave error made by the Harper government, her children, who most likely will come back to Canada and who are Canadians because their mother is Canadian, will not be able to become Canadian until Bill C-3 is passed.

She told me one time, so sad that she was crying, that her parents' fault was that, even though they were nationalized Canadians, they took a job somewhere else in the world and did not come back to Canada when she was born. They stayed wherever they were living at that time, and as a result, somehow under the law, that connection was broken.

This legislation would fix the problem that was created by the Harper government. It would do so by providing for the “substantial connection” that the courts talked about. I have heard the debate about where the 1,095 days come from. That is required of any immigrant, like somebody who becomes a permanent resident when they come to Canada. Under the Citizenship Act, they have to be living in Canada for 1,095 days.

By the way, they are not cumulative, those 1,095 days, for someone to become a Canadian citizen. Anybody serving in Parliament who has become a citizen knows this. My family and I had to live here 1,095 days, and we did not do it in consecutive days over a three-year period. It was done over a four-, five- or six-year period in my family's case. That is where the standard is coming from. This bill would essentially keep the standard consistent by giving that criteria.

My time is limited, but I really want to stress that this is an important piece of legislation. This is legislation that would ensure we have only one kind of Canadian citizen, not tier A, tier B or tier C, as with the kind of effort we saw from the Harper government, to which thankfully our courts have been applying the charter in a manner ensuring that a Canadian citizen is treated equally under the law, that there are no different levels of Canadian citizens and that Canadians who live abroad are still able to pass along their Canadian citizenship when they have children.

We are a small country, but one of the most incredible things about Canada and being Canadian is how many Canadians we meet around the world anytime we travel. Canadians are proud, and one of our great virtues is that we contribute, take employment and engage in activities around the world. We are not a country that just lives within ourselves. One of the great benefits I have seen when travelling the world is meeting Canadians all over the world, but somehow the Harper government created a law that penalized Canadians for being abroad.

• (1255)

That is why I am supportive of this bill. I think it is high time we fix a grave error made by the Harper government. I am sad that it took us this long. I hope this time around the legislation will pass so that the Canadians who have found themselves in limbo and are unable to make their children Canadian citizens will see them become Canadian citizens and contribute to the well-being of our great country.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that as a former attorney general, the member would choose his words more carefully. This court decision did not compel the Liberals to bring forward a bill of mass chain migration. It addressed a simple issue that there was a Conservative proposal to ameliorate.

My colleague criticized us for scaremongering and suggesting that millions of people will come to Canada. Could he tell us what the number is so we can have the facts?

Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I would also advise the member opposite to use his words carefully and not fall into the trap of using slogans provided by his House leader or his leader's office, who does not even have a seat here. That is essentially what is happening.

I had never heard of the term “mass chain citizenship” until today in this House. Why? It is because somebody in Pierre Poilievre's office came up with it. Perhaps Pierre Poilievre has a lot of time on his hands nowadays, but repeating it again and again does not make it true. Let us deal with facts.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear that the parliamentary secretary had not looked at the bill until this morning and is learning all about it now.

There is one thing I want to point out. He talked about how the 1,095 days might be consistent with something else. The government's website says that someone has to have lived in Canada for three out of the last five years to be eligible to become a Canadian citizen. Would the member agree that is a better test for a substantial connection to Canada?

Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the question.

It may be a better solution. That is exactly what the committee process is for. We know that bills go to committee and get amended. If Conservative members feel this does not allow for a substantial connection, then let us have that conversation at committee. That is exactly what we should do.

I was also responding to what I had heard, that this 1,095 days is a made-up number or that somehow we should have an American standard of five years. I disagree with that. If we can strengthen how we calculate the 1,095 days, let us have that conversation.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech.

He said that it was not their fault and that the Conservative government created the problem. I would like my colleague to tell me why his government did not fix the situation before now if it was so serious.

There were parliamentary reports dating as far back as 2007 on lost Canadians. The issue got media attention. There was even a legal challenge filed in 2021. It took a decision by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice for the government to act.

I would like my colleague to explain why no one at the immigration department noticed that this was not working.

Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question.

[English]

In my view, I wish we had solved this problem before. Even when I was not a member of this House, I advocated on this issue. As I mentioned, I ran an organization called the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. This is one of the policy ideas we worked on. Perhaps we could have done it, but the moment is here.

It was delayed before, in the previous Parliament, but we have a bill. Of course, all bills need improvement. Let us get it to committee. Let us work fast at committee, make the improvements necessary, bring it back for third reading and pass it.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member, just as I have, has attended citizen-

ship ceremonies. It is always a very special moment for the people being sworn in as citizens.

One thing I always talk about is how wonderful it is to be a Canadian. Now the Superior Court of Ontario has highlighted that there is a difference between a naturally born citizen and someone who comes here and becomes a citizen. I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on the two-tier system that Harper set up and on the reason we have to get rid of it.

● (1300)

Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, this is precisely the point I was making. I thank the member for Winnipeg North for raising this point.

Conservatives were trying to create two tiers of citizenship, one for those of us who are born here and one for those who have been naturalized. Somehow there are different rules for those two categories of people. Well, guess what the courts have told us: That is not constitutional.

I take that very seriously from my own lived experience as somebody who came here at the age of 15. I have two children who were born in Canada. There should be no difference between the citizenship rights I have and those of my children born in Canada. We are trying to fix that through this law.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to rise to speak to this bill for the many reasons I spoke about it in this House in the last Parliament.

I have had the privilege of working with colleagues from all parties on committee specifically on this legislation, which impacts Canadian families. The spirit behind this bill is that Prime Minister Harper, in 2009, basically created a first-generation limit, creating a double system in immigration and causing children born outside of Canada to Canadian citizens to struggle to acquire their right to be Canadians.

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First of all, Canada is built on institutions that uphold fairness, strengthen opportunity and provide certainty to its citizens, and today, as we are talking about Bill C-3, we have the opportunity to reinforce one of those foundational institutions, which is citizenship. I want to be clear that this bill addresses a gap between the intent of our laws and the lived reality of Canadian families. Specifically, it intends to restore the ability of Canadian citizens born abroad to pass their citizenship to their kids and grandchildren, ending a policy that left many Canadian families in limbo, unsure of whether their children would be recognized by the country they serve or contribute to and call home.

This is not an abstract policy fix. This is about restoring stability for military families that are posted overseas, for diplomatic corps who have represented Canada with dignity and integrity, and for the countless global Canadians who have lived and worked abroad while remaining firmly rooted in the values of our country.

Citizenship is not a transactional benefit. It is a covenant between the individual and the state, between generations, between past sacrifices and future potential. When we deny that link, we undermine the trust in our system and introduce a risk that erodes the social contract that underpins our democracy.

When families return home after years of service or work abroad, they should be able to resume their lives without bureaucracy clouding the future of their children. Bill C-3 would deliver that. It would provide clarity where there was confusion, fairness where there was inconsistency and continuity where there was disruption. It says to families that they are Canadian and their children are as well. That is not only the right decision; it is part of our foundation of rights, our charter rights.

Canadians work to pay taxes, contribute to our communities and are civically engaged. They raise their children to be Canadian. In the House earlier, I heard a number of members ask what really constitutes a deep connection to being Canadian. When a Canadian citizen has children, I am more than sure they pass Canadian values to their children regardless of where they find themselves in the world.

Having this conversation when a parent has a child and wants to return home means talking about bureaucracy, reaching out to IRCC and trying to figure out whom they can call, whether it is their member of Parliament or member of provincial Parliament. With that tier of bureaucracy, it is a very confusing system for Canadians who have served us and who, for different reasons, do not have Canadian citizenship.

This bill, in spirit, works to restore stability to help Canadians understand that it is their institutional right to be Canadians and not have the lawmakers of the country having that discussion. If Harper had not created this system, I do not think we would be having this conversation.

I will remind the many colleagues who have asked questions as if we are having this conversation for the first time that this is not the first time we have had this discussion. We have brought Canadian families who belong in the lost Canadian group to Parliament and told them we think it is important that we restore their citizenship. Here we are again having the discussion as if for the first

time, questioning the many families that have struggled through this system wondering whether they belong as Canadians or not. We are having this debate today as if the work that has been done for the last number of years is not important, and that is not fair.

We need to protect Canadians, and we cannot afford to put them on pause due to legal technicalities that do not reflect modern mobility or the realities of a globalized world. As we build what we believe to be a fair Canada, we have to be fair to the men and women who have served our country and their children.

● (1305)

We have to be fair as well when we reach out to people to come here to talk to lawmakers and to engage in committees for a number of hours. My colleague from the Bloc Québécois mentioned earlier how many hours he spent listening to filibustering that happened on Bill C-71 when it was introduced in the House in the last Parliament. I can speak only to the last Parliament, because I was here. I was not here when the bill was first introduced, but in the last Parliament, I was here, and I saw the countless hours we spent filibustering, blocking conversations around whether or not Canadian families deserve to be Canadians.

They went through that. They withstood the long conversations. They listened to the banter. They listened to disagreements. They listened to people talk about them as if they were not humans and as if they were not in the room, to get to the end.

We got to the end. We brought the bill into the House. We passed it. It went to the Senate, and for parliamentary reasons, we are back at the bill again, and we are here to discuss it to make sure we can take it to committee, agree on amendments that make sense, and pass it quickly. The last thing we want to do is start conversations on whether or not people deserve to have Canadian citizenship restored.

Unfortunately, I have been here this morning and have listened to colleagues re-question. I have listened to colleagues who sat with me on committee and promised to those families that we would not do this again. They re-question instead of proposing amendments, instead of agreeing that we can send the bill to committee and work together on amending it in an appropriate way and in a fast manner that would actually stop the long delay of Canadian families going through limbo, where they do not know and are re-asking themselves whether they are valued Canadians.

I thought that we had settled that problem. I know that today's Chair was also on the committee. We settled the problem. We settled the issue of making Canadians question whether they belong. We settled the issue of having the banter and the debate that is politicized for Canadians, but here we are again.

I have listened to countless speeches in which people are putting those Canadians back into the debate of “Am I a valued Canadian?” I want to tell them that yes, they are a valued Canadian. I want to tell people like Don Chapman, who spent countless hours working with parliamentarians, working with committees and working with different members of our public service to make sure that we get to a place where lost Canadians are no longer considered lost and to where they are Canadians, as we all in the House believe that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

I am very happy to rise and to reassure the lost Canadian families, the many people who came to Parliament to speak to us and to ask us to make sure we pass the bill, that we are going to do that. We are not only going to make sure that we pass the bill; we will also work with all parties across the House to make sure that amendments make sense and that we do not have to put people through the limbo of questioning their value, of questioning whether they can even serve as Canadians and of questioning whether they are Canadian.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that amendments are on the table and that the government is willing to listen to them. One of the things, as the member well knows, is that we are very concerned about the bill's allowing for non-consecutive days in Canada and a fairly weak connection test to Canada.

I would like to remind the member that the rule for becoming a citizen is that people have to have been in Canada for three out of the last five years. I would ask the member whether she thinks that might be a better substantial connection test that could be done as an amendment to the bill.

• (1310)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite would remember, he was on that committee, and we worked on amendments that made sense. We passed the bill through the House. We sent it to the Senate. It is back now. If the member has amendments that he wants to propose, we can discuss them in committee, but the reality is that the member has supported the bill in the past.

With respect to the question around the numbers, I have heard many people ask, “How many is it?” We have had that conversation in committee. With respect to any question the member has had this day, we have had that conversation. We are saying that we are happy to bring in amendments that make sense, in committee, and work together with all parties to make sure that we do not put Canadian families through this limbo as—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rimouski—La Matapédia.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said earlier, the Bloc Québécois is obviously in favour of this bill. We want to finally move on to something else because what we are doing this morning is recycling. I have to let honest workers and taxpayers know. This problem has existed since 2009, when the Conservative Party changed the legislation. We know the problem, and we know the solutions; now is the time to act.

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My question for my colleague is this. If this issue is so important, why did her government not resolve it when it had a majority? The Liberals had a majority from 2015 to 2019. They had four years to do it, and nothing has been done.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague understands very well how Canadian democracy works when Canadians want an election. There were frequent calls for an election for several months in the House of Commons while I was here. Let us also remember that we were not a majority but a minority, and that our colleagues opposite continued to call for an election, which we gave them.

I think my colleague also understands that the Liberal government came back with 44 Quebec seats, so he understands that democracy works, in a way. I also appreciate the fact that his fellow party members will be able to work with us to pass this bill very quickly.

[*English*]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe it is good legislation, and it is very similar to the legislation that was in the previous Parliament. It is actually better legislation than two times ago, so we have made improvements, and the process at committees is working. We need to move forward to committee so we can call the question and consider any amendments.

I would like the member to reiterate whom the legislation would impact. We are hearing from the opposition side about the number of days and whether it should be similar to obtaining Canadian citizenship. I understand that the legislation would be actually dealing with Canadian citizens, and once someone has earned the privilege, the right to be a Canadian citizen, they are a Canadian citizen, and this is in regard to people having children abroad, the second generation abroad, but who are proud Canadian citizens.

I would just like the member to reiterate what the legislation is, why it needs to advance and the importance of it.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, a Canadian is a Canadian, whether someone is a Canadian by birthright or became a Canadian through naturalization, which is how I became a Canadian. I came here as a young refugee. I grew up here, and I worked hard to become a Canadian citizen. I am a Canadian citizen.

Imagine if I were able to serve outside of Canada now for a number of years; I would fall into the double-tier system the Harper government created to divide Canadians and make it so some are valued Canadians and some are not valued Canadians. That is what we want to get rid of. There are many service members like Don Chapman, whom I mentioned earlier, people who served our country and have been part of the lost Canadians, who want to make sure this does not continue to happen.

We are committed to making the legislation happen, because we believe a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

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Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to split my time.

This might be a new Parliament and a new Prime Minister, but we are tackling the same old problems with the exact same fraught solutions, and we have heard a lot about that today. What is worse is that the Liberal government cannot even admit the failures that every single Canadian now, no matter whom they voted for, can see exist.

I am going to cut right to it. The current government broke the Canadian immigration system. It broke the 100-year consensus of our system, and it has taken a system that was once the envy of the world, of so many people who have come to call Canada home, and made it a system that is now rife with abuse and incompetence. Frankly, it was not that way 10 years ago. The vast majority of Canadians, and any rational person, would look at this and say the exact same thing: The immigration system needs fixing. We need something to restore the trust and integrity that it once had.

However, now we have an immigration minister who cannot answer the most basic questions. In fact, there are members on the other side of the House who spoke today who probably read the legislation, who were at committee, and who have answered every single question better than she could. I learned that first-hand last week when the minister could not say how many people we have welcomed to Canada. She could not tell us whether they would ever complete proper security checks. She could not tell us who was going to leave, when they were going to leave nor how they were going to do that.

It seems like members of the Liberal government at this point are crossing their fingers. They are throwing anybody who has not yet been in the role of the immigration minister into the fight, hoping the problems just go away. That does not make our country safe. It does not ensure that people can access health care. It does not give people the opportunity to find jobs, does not help them find homes and does not keep the offenders or, frankly, terrorists from entering our country. Members may have noticed that the most reasonable people in this country on immigration are no longer walking on eggshells about the issue. They have called it out for what it is: a deeply broken system that the government over the last 10 years broke.

Here is what I have to say to the seven ministers in 10 years who have added to the breaking of the system in Canada and the consensus we once had with the system: The bill does not solve the problems that it was intended to solve. It actually creates more of them. That is what we need to ensure that the House understands.

Immigration levels have been far too high for the last number of years. I certainly think so. Municipal leaders think so. Provincial premiers think so. Even non-partisan civil servants think so. They have said as much. The proposed fix cannot be to have 100,000 people become citizens with a stroke of a pen or a vote of the House. Maybe it is 100,000; the government does not even know the number. We have heard multiple estimates from multiple members on the other side. That is irresponsible.

Bill C-3 talks about citizenship for people who have hardly spent any time in this country, just 36 months, which do not have to be consecutive. That is the number one problem with it.

What about security screenings? We have not talked a lot in the House about security screenings, the ones that the minister could not describe last week. She did not even know what they entailed. Bill C-3 would extend citizenship without basic security checks, without a single background check and without a single interview.

What about the backlog in our system that we have not talked much about? It has kept literally millions of people in line for years. The backlog of asylum claimants alone is nearly 300,000, while the citizenship backlog is about a million. Bill C-3 would obviously add to that backlog. There needs to be concern about a system that has lost all of its integrity and has lost the confidence of Canadians. We would want to ensure that the backlog does not get worse. Our own budget watchdog tells us that it will take \$21 million, but he is handicapped on understanding the bill, as they do not know the numbers, how many it would affect, or how this would happen.

However, those are all secondary issues. Not only is the bill far away from what this country needs on immigration, but it is also a big step in the wrong direction. I think it would make the problems that the Liberals have created over the last number of years worse, so nobody should be celebrating.

• (1315)

I will make this clear: Nobody should be celebrating that our immigration system is broken. It has built this country. It has ensured that people like my parents can come here and flee the place that they do not even want to talk about anymore for a new life in Canada, where their first-generation child can become a member of Parliament, something that they would never have dreamed of. It is resilient. It makes our country unique, and it is part of our cultural and economic strength.

The country needs immigration, but it also needs to work for Canadians and to work for Canada. Right now, it does neither of those things. It works for nobody. It does not work for the young people, the old people, the first generation or the sixth generation. It does not work for people who cannot afford a home, people who cannot get in to see a doctor when they need one, people who cannot get a job when they have to or the people who have spent years languishing in lines, waiting their turn without any idea of when any of this would actually happen. It does not help the people who were scammed by the fake colleges or foreign-cash-addicted universities that, under the watch and the encouragement of the government, have gotten out of control. It does not serve the people who came here for the promise of this country.

About 40% of our newcomers already say that they want to leave. We cannot pretend that using a hammer, in this case, is going to fix something that could be fixed with a scalpel.

Based on this, it should come as no surprise that, despite promising a lower amount of newcomers, the government is still issuing a record number of permits. This year, there have been nearly 100,000 study permits and 50,000 temporary work permits. This should be expected from an immigration minister who told this country, in her previous job as the immigration minister for Nova Scotia, that she wanted absolutely no caps on immigration. She has denied that. It is not a great track record to engender confidence in the new seventh minister in 10 years.

If the members opposite actually want to take an interest in making this better, I have some advice to make it better. While we do need to fix the wrongs of the past, the former bill did that. If there are elements and specific cases where it did not, we could find ways to do it with a very targeted approach. We supported fixing the lost Canadians via the targeted bill that we saw from the other place, Bill S-245, but Bill C-3 goes too far.

Bill C-3 actually weakens Canadian citizenship. It would devalue Canadian citizenship for everyone else. It would open the door by eliminating the ties to Canada as a requirement, or at least the strength of the ties to Canada as a requirement. It would eliminate the first-generation limit. It would grant citizenship to those born abroad with one parent who has spent 1,095 consecutive days here.

We have heard a lot of conversation about this, and I am glad to hear that the members opposite, the Liberals, are open to amendments to changing that, to substantiating it into a test that makes sense. They are not required to have substantial ties.

Again, the vague substantial connection test allows multi-generational foreign residents to claim citizenship with minimal presence in Canada. That devalues the citizenship. It devalues not only the rights that are afforded to every other citizen but also the responsibility that citizens have in making sure that they are citizens.

I want to make Canada's immigration system the envy of the world. We cannot do that if Canadians do not believe in the integrity of the system. We cannot do that if we look out onto our streets today and see what is happening, while we are saying no to security vetting, to any kind of interview or to making sure that criminal record checks are conducted. We cannot possibly stand up today in this country and say that is not necessary.

I look forward to hearing what the Liberals' thoughts are on an amendment that would ensure security and vetting are taken seriously, something that the Liberals have not done in our immigration system. It is something that has played out on our streets here in Canada, something that has been shown in case after case of people being charged before they committed a terrorist act in this country. I want to see a government take this responsibly, and I want to see citizenship mean something in this country.

We have a bill without its amendments and the provisions the government currently has with the minister, who knows nothing about the bill, who has presented it in the House. I want to see those changed. I look forward to having that conversation, but I look forward more to the Liberals accepting those amendments.

• (1320)

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have heard Conservative after Conservative get up to

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talk about a substantial connection. A lot of provinces have substantial connection rules too. For example, the Province of Alberta says that someone cannot run as an MLA unless they have had a substantial connection of at least six months.

I am curious if the member believes that Pierre Poilievre should have a substantial connection to Alberta before he runs as a member of Parliament in that province.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, I thought that we were going to have a serious conversation about the bill. Maybe the member has not read it.

I assure members that Pierre Poilievre will seek the support and trust of the people of Battle River—Crowfoot, a place where he grew up, a place where he was born and a place where he was raised.

I look forward to his bashing down that member when he is back in September.

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government mentioned in the throne speech that its priority is to restore public confidence in the immigration system. I would like my colleague to simply tell me whether she agrees that this bill, which seems rather minor to me, will really restore public confidence in the immigration system.

What concrete steps does she suggest we prioritize to really address the root causes of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's deep-seated problems?

[*English*]

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, it would be giving Canadians the confidence of an immigration minister who can answer a single question in the House, who knows a single thing about her portfolio or who has even read the bill that she has presented in the House. That would be the first thing to engender confidence in an immigration system that the government has broken over the last 10 years.

We used to have the best system in the world. It brought the best and the brightest to the country. That is no longer the case. Members do not have to hear it from me. We could go ask 10 Canadians on the street if they think the system is broken, and they would tell us, 10 out of 10 times, yes.

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Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues we have with the government is the abject failure of minister after minister on the immigration file. We have seen it here today. When I look at the departmental plans that just came out, late, of course, from the government, over the last four years, I see that it has failed on over 50% of its metrics.

Every single year, the department is failing more than it is succeeding in achieving its goals. I wonder if my colleague could provide some insight as to why the government is focusing on issues instead of fixing its problems in-house.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, I think that my hon. colleague from this side has spent exponentially more time looking at the immigration minister's website than the actual Minister of Immigration, who does not know the numbers and does not know the issues. The very fact that the Liberals have had seven ministers in 10 years should tell us everything we need to know about how seriously the government takes the issue of immigration.

For Canadians to have a system that is so deeply broken, after having one that was the envy of the world for so many years, is a travesty.

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would just like my colleague to provide me with more information about the proposal to security screen Canadian citizens, because I am trying to understand what she is saying.

For example, in my riding of Trois-Rivières, there is a Canadian citizen whose child was born prematurely while he was travelling abroad. This citizen came to Canada at the age of five to escape an oppressive regime.

Should the security screening be done on the baby, who cannot receive medical care right now because he is not yet a Canadian citizen, or should it be done on the dad, who has been in Canada for 40 years?

[English]

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the answer is no, of course. The question has, frankly, nothing to do with what we are talking about here. The very idea that we could have a targeted approach for those who claim to be Canadian citizens, who have no connection or substantial connection to this place, and who are adults who want to enjoy the responsibility of Canadian citizenship, is what we are talking about. The member opposite ought to know that.

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today, not just as the member of Parliament for Richmond Hill South, but as a representative of one of the ridings with the highest concentration of first-generation and second-generation Canadians, where close to 90% of residents are either immigrants to Canada themselves or have parents who were immigrants to Canada.

This is not just a statistic. It is the lived experience of my constituents. These are families that came to this country with nothing but hope, a Canadian promise and a work ethic. These are people who took jobs that kept this country running, in engineering, nursing homes or small businesses. These are people who waited years,

followed every rule, got an education, trained, recertified for jobs, studied for their citizenship exams, paid their taxes, paid their dues and did everything right.

In my riding, many new Canadians came here fleeing war, political persecution or economic hardship. They are people who sacrificed everything just to give their children a chance at a better life.

Many of them came from places, such as Iran, where dissidents are jailed for speaking freely by a brutal totalitarian regime. Others came from Hong Kong, where democracy and freedom are eroding. Some came from China to seek a better life for their children. Still others arrived from post-war Europe with little more than the clothes in their suitcases. These people did not just arrive here with a passport offered to them. They built the foundations of Canada with their bare hands. They all came here to build a better life, and they made Canada stronger in the process. When they finally swore the oath to become Canadian citizens, it meant something. It was a moment they longed for, a moment they dreamt about, and a moment of immense pride and earned belonging.

While the Liberals have spent the last 10 years erasing the very heritage that defines who we are as a country, they are now turning the page and undermining what it means to be a Canadian citizen.

When the Liberal government tabled Bill C-3, a bill that offers automatic Canadian citizenship to people who have never stepped foot in this country, never paid taxes here, never even expressed a desire to live here, and never even sang *O Canada* under our proud flag, I could not stay silent.

This bill sends a clear message to my constituents in Richmond Hill South. Their hard work, their patience, their loyalty to this country means less than someone else's paperwork and bloodline. This bill does not fix the system the Liberals broke. It deepens the unfairness. It makes a mockery of the sacrifices made by immigrants who paid their dues. It is yet another example of a Liberal government that is more concerned with global virtue signalling than with actually standing up for the people who built this country.

Let us talk about fairness, because that is what this debate is really about. Across this country, there are millions of immigrants who came to Canada legally. They followed the rules, waited patiently in line and built their lives here, working long hours, raising families, paying taxes and volunteering in their communities.

Many of them have been here for years, contributing more to Canada than most people, yet they still cannot get their citizenship finalized. I have personally experienced this as a member of Parliament for Richmond Hill South. Having only been elected for less than two months, my constituency office has received hundreds and hundreds of immigration case files already.

I have met many new Canadians who are more engaged in their communities than most Liberal politicians, yet they are stuck in the limbo because of a backlog, bureaucratic red tape and a system broken by Liberals that treats them like a statistic.

Now, this same Liberal government wants to give away Canadian citizenship like it is some kind of souvenir. Bill C-3 would grant citizenship automatically to people born abroad, even if they have never been to Canada, never contributed to our economy, never served under our flag, never celebrated our heritage and never even intended to live here.

How is that fair? How do we tell someone who has been working in Canada for years, building a life, contributing to the economy, paying taxes and sometimes even raising Canadian-born children, that they must continue to wait, jump through hoops, navigate a system broken by the Liberals, while someone born abroad who has never set foot here is handed citizenship automatically by the Liberal government, without question?

It is offensive. It is elitist. It sounds like an idea that came straight from Davos at the World Economic Forum. More importantly, it does not embody the Canadian promise.

This is just the Liberal way, which is to erase our heritage, mock hard-working immigrants and reward those with connections, global privilege and the right bloodline, while ignoring the working-class immigrants who have done the real work of building this country.

● (1330)

This is the same Liberal government that has thrown open the borders to criminals crossing into our country illegally but that forces honest immigrants to spend years waiting for a fair hearing. This is not compassion. This is not about justice. This is political theatre, a feel-good vanity bill from a Liberal government obsessed with symbolism and blinded to the reality facing new Canadians on the ground.

Even more alarming is that the bill would eliminate the first-generation limit but would open the door to granting citizenship to those born abroad if just one parent had spent 1,095 days in Canada over their lifetime, even nonconsecutively, which is three years spread out however they like. There are no requirements for criminal background checks, understanding or experience of what it means to be Canadian or demonstrated commitment to this country; it is just a rubber stamp. This makes a mockery of the standards that immigrants have spent years trying to meet.

Conservatives believe in something different. We believe that citizenship is a badge of belonging, not a trinket that is passed around. We believe it should be earned by those who commit to this country, who uphold our values, who are loyal to Canada and who are proud to call Canada home, not handed out based on convenience. We stand with the people who work hard, follow the law and contribute to our communities; these are people who are too often forgotten by the Liberal government and betrayed by a system that favours the global elite over the Canadian worker. While the Liberals reward inherited privilege, Conservatives will fight for those who invest in Canada, not those who treat it like it is a backup plan.

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Let us talk about what the bill gets fundamentally wrong about the very meaning of Canadian citizenship. One of the most troubling aspects of Bill C-3 is that it continues to treat Canadian citizenship as a trophy that is passed on rather than a civic privilege tied to commitment, values and contribution. This is a profoundly elitist and out-of-touch view of what it means to be Canadian. Canada is not a bloodline. It is not an accident of birth. Canada is a country a person believes in, a country they build, a country they choose and a country that should choose them because of their loyalty and their commitment to its success.

What is even more concerning is that no real ties to Canada would be required if the Liberal legislation passed. The bill proposes a vague substantial connection test, a standard so loose that it opens the door to granting citizenship to people who may have no or only minimal or even symbolic interaction with Canada, subject to the broad discretion of unelected bureaucrats. Multi-generational foreign residents could potentially claim Canadian citizenship without ever having lived here, worked here or embraced the values we hold dear. That is not a recipe for national cohesion; it is a recipe for chaos. However, under Bill C-3, someone who happens to be born abroad to a Canadian citizen and who has not lived in Canada for decades would get a free pass, while someone who volunteers in their community, pays taxes, works hard, celebrates our heritage and raises children in Canada is left waiting. It is wrong; it is backwards, and it cheapens the value of citizenship.

Bill C-3 says that citizenship is about bloodlines. Conservatives say citizenship is about belonging, contribution, allegiance and shared values. The Liberal government wants to create a system where privilege and ancestry matter more than action and values. That is not the Canada our parents and grandparents built, and it is not the Canada we should leave to the next generation.

There is more at stake here than just principle, because there is also the cost of it. With automatic citizenship comes automatic obligations, including the duty to protect and evacuate citizens during international emergencies. We saw the staggering cost of deploying consular services and evacuation operations during a crisis in Lebanon. If Bill C-3 is passed, we may be on the hook to rescue and bring into Canada and provide those services to individuals who have never even lived in Canada and who may have no actual connection to this country beyond mere paperwork.

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Canada must never become a country that values someone's last name more than their loyalty to this country. The worst part is that the Liberal government admits it does not even know how many people this would apply to. There are no numbers, no data and no accountability. It is just another open-ended promise with Canadian taxpayers left to foot the bill. This is not irresponsible; it is reckless. It reeks of the same people who cannot be bothered to table a budget.

I will end with this: Conservatives will always stand up for strong families, for people who are loyal to this country, for the people who built this country and who are still doing so, including the hard-working immigrants of Richmond Hill South. They will fight for fairness, for hard work, for earned citizenship and for a Canada that puts Canadian citizens and our heritage first.

• (1335)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member realizes that the legislation is before us, in good part, because of a decision that was made in an Ontario superior court. In that decision, there is reference to a double standard. The administration of Stephen Harper made changes, in essence establishing two tiers of Canadians: those born here in Canada and those who are naturalized here in Canada, becoming permanent residents and eventually citizens.

Does the member, and the Conservative Party, believe today that it is okay to have a double standard for Canadian citizens?

• (1340)

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, rights come with responsibilities. Citizenship is more than a legal status; it is a bond to this country.

If someone has never lived here, never contributed and never shown any connection to Canada beyond a parent's passport, how can we say they are truly Canadian? We are not talking about military families or aid workers here. We are talking about a wide open policy with no limits and no accountability. That is not compassion. That is recklessness.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, right now the Liberals are criticizing Harper's first-generation limit and claiming they need to fix the system. I decided to go look at Hansard, and the Liberals passed a unanimous consent motion to pass Bill C-37 at all stages on February 15, 2008.

Why is it that Liberals continue to mislead the House? Would the member agree that the Liberals today are a far cry from the Liberals from a generation ago, who believed in all-party consensus on immigration policies?

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, let us be clear here. This is not about punishing Canadians born abroad. It is about respecting the meaning of Canadian citizenship.

My constituents in Richmond Hill South did not get citizenship handed to them by bloodline. They earned it. They waited. They worked. They sacrificed. All we are saying is, if someone wants citizenship, they should show the same commitment.

The bill erases that standard and replaces it with a bloodline test. That is not fairness. It is privilege. Conservatives believe in equal opportunity, not automatic entitlements.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while we were prorogued, we had a special constituent born: Remi Robson Murray, the grandchild of my former teacher Cam Murray and the child of Aidan and Jessie. I welcome Remi to our great Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

I also want to give a special shout-out to my goddaughter, who is celebrating her graduation this weekend, Emery Britton. It has been a pleasure and an honour watching her grow into the young woman she is. I am so proud of her.

To my hon. colleague, we have heard a lot of talk from the Liberals. Would he agree that over the last 10 years, their talk and their rhetoric have not matched their actions?

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have spent the last 10 years erasing our heritage and breaking our immigration system.

Instead of trying to fix that immigration system, fixing that backlog and capping the levels of immigration, they have decided to exploit this opportunity, a bill that was tabled by our side of the aisle under the Senate, and turn it into some vanity ideological project. It is simply insulting, and it is simply a mockery of everyday Canadians, especially immigrants who have worked hard their entire lives, and who have paid their dues, paid their taxes and contributed to Canada.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the member perhaps just bring it back to the legislation? The fact is that with Canadian citizenship, rights and privileges do come with responsibilities, which I agree with.

Does the member agree that the right way to provide suggestions and amendments to the legislation would be at committee?

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals truly cared about fairness and cared about fixing their legislation, they would clear the backlog that real immigrants are facing right now, instead of turning the bill and this opportunity into a vanity ideological project.

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Spadina—Harbourfront.

I acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional unceded territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin people.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-3 and the transformative power of Canadian citizenship. Fundamentally, this bill is about people, real families, as well as their history, their sacrifices and their deep and lasting ties with Canada, regardless of where their careers or lives take them.

I am an example of this myself. My two children were born in New York when I was completing my master's degree. Although they have lived in Canada for most of their lives and my ancestors settled in Batisca, near Trois-Rivières, in the 17th century, the law enacted by Stephen Harper's Conservative government could prevent my grandchildren from holding Canadian citizenship or require them to undergo security screening to ensure that they are entitled to citizenship should they decide to study or work in another country at some point in their lives. What the Conservative government did affects the choices of people who wish to study or work abroad because, if they do that, their children might not get Canadian citizenship.

Citizenship is a legal status, but more than that, it is about belonging to a diverse, welcoming community bound by shared democratic values. In today's world, where migration and mobility are facts of life, Canada has a chance to lead by example. While some countries restrict access to citizenship, Canada is taking a more principled approach with this bill, an approach that encompasses diversity, cross-border families and the lasting ties that Canadians have with other countries.

Many Canadians live and work abroad. There are Canadian expat communities in big cities all over the world. These expats work in a variety of fields, including international development, the arts, science, education, global trade and humanitarian work. These citizens have deep ties to Canada. They often move back here to raise children, take care of loved ones and build new communities. Taking action to make sure that their children can share this identity, even if they were born or adopted abroad, is not simply a matter of fairness. It also makes our country more cohesive and influential on the world stage.

Today, I want to share what new Canadians told us about why Canadian citizenship is important to them, how becoming a citizen affected them, and what we should do to continue to protect the rights, responsibilities and shared values of citizenship.

The act of becoming a Canadian citizen is often described as a very proud moment. As my Conservative colleague mentioned, people are proud to make Canada their home and proud of the journey they took to get here. Becoming a Canadian citizen is the culmination of years of sacrifice, hard work and perseverance, not just for the person themselves, but often for their whole family. It is a moment that connects them to their community. It is also an opportunity to take part in something greater than themselves.

Many MPs have had the honour of witnessing the emotional impact of that moment. Newcomers, often accompanied by their children, clutch their certificates tightly, knowing that their family's future is safer in our wonderful country. That feeling of pride goes beyond borders. People around the world hope to get the opportunity to make Canada their home. To those fleeing conflict, persecution and hardship, Canadian citizenship represents a fresh start, a second chance at life. It is a privilege that most do not take lightly.

Government Orders

The gratitude expressed by new citizens is profound. People often talk about the opportunities that Canada offers, especially when it comes to education, health care and peace. These pillars of Canadian life are the cornerstones of a better future, not only for new citizens themselves, but also for their children and future generations. Whether through volunteering, participating in local cultural events or simply getting to know their neighbours, new Canadians are actively involved in strengthening the fabric of our society. They embody Canada's spirit of generosity and contribute in many ways to the success of their communities.

● (1345)

As a government, we must remain vigilant in ensuring that Canadian citizenship remains a beacon of and a commitment to inclusivity, fairness and security. That is why we have introduced Bill C-3: to ensure that access to citizenship remains fair and transparent.

At a time when disinformation and division, including division here in the House, can threaten confidence in public institutions, Canada must show that its commitment to fairness extends across borders.

Providing thoughtful, inclusive pathways to citizenship beyond the first generation affirms that Canadian identity is shaped not only by place of birth, but also by connection, contribution and values.

This bill aims to automatically remedy the status of individuals who would have been Canadians were it not for the first-generation limit. It also creates a forward-looking new framework for citizenship by descent. In the future, children born abroad beyond the first generation will be eligible for citizenship if their Canadian parents can demonstrate a substantial connection to Canada. This is important. In the future, as long as the Canadian parent who was born abroad spends a cumulative total of three years in Canada before the birth of their child, their child will also be born a citizen. There is no need to be conducting security screening on babies.

The objective and structure of the Citizenship Act have been that children adopted abroad by Canadians and children born abroad to Canadians are treated as similarly as possible, and this will continue to be the case after Bill C-3 comes into force.

Government Orders

The great privilege of Canadian citizenship comes with great responsibility. It is a responsibility to engage, to contribute and to build on the values that make our country what it is. Citizenship is not just a destination. It is a journey and a commitment to community, justice and mutual respect. This is why, once Bill C-3 is passed, Canadians born outside Canada who adopt children abroad will have to meet the same substantial connection requirement to have access to the direct grant of citizenship for adoptees as they would have to meet to pass on their citizenship if they had a child born abroad. These children, whether adopted abroad or born abroad, will also have to meet the substantial connection requirement to pass on their citizenship if they have or adopt children abroad in the future.

In conclusion, obtaining Canadian citizenship is an important and emotional step. It is a privilege that entails opportunity and gratitude, as well as a responsibility to stay true to the values that unite us. Citizenship is not simply a legal matter. It is a reflection of who we are and who we include. By passing Bill C-3, we will be choosing connection over exclusion, equity over limitation. We will be telling Canadians around the world and their children that their connection to our country is important and that their stories, contributions and sense of belonging are part of what makes Canada strong.

• (1350)

[English]

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech intently. One thing we need to know as we study this bill in the House and maybe further in committee is the impact of it on Canada. In other words, how many people would this bill impact? How many new Canadians would it create?

I ask that because it is important. It would affect the administrative requirements of Canada with people applying for citizenship, applying for old age security and applying for passports. Also, there would be financial implications. If people are going to gain old age security, that is going to be a cost.

I wonder if the member has an idea of how many people this bill would impact and what the cost would be.

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, those are excellent questions that should be addressed at committee, which is the next step for this bill.

[Translation]

I see no reason to continue down the path of division. I think that enough Canadians have come forward. We have seen people here.

As a newly elected member, I was not here during the last Parliament, but I know that this bill has been under discussion for a very long time and that information has been shared and examined in committee. Now, I think that Canadians expect us to move our study of this bill forward.

• (1355)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member that there has been a great deal of

discussion over the years in regard to this particular issue. One could argue that we could date it all the way back to 2008-09. Whether it is debates inside the chamber or debates in committee rooms, there has been a great deal of discussion.

I hear there are concerns from the Conservative members, and I believe it would be beneficial for the Conservatives to have amendments. We are heading into the summer, and I am not convinced the bill is going to pass before the break, but it would be wonderful to have more dialogue and discussions about potential amendments.

Could I get the member's thoughts on that? The minister made it very clear in her opening remarks that as a minister, she is very open to ways the bill could be improved. Could she provide her thoughts on the willingness of the Minister of Immigration to hear amendments?

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Before I recognize the hon. parliamentary secretary, I would like to have members' attention.

[English]

As colleagues are entering the chamber before question period, there is a lot of noise. If we could, let us continue with debate.

[Translation]

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, yes, I believe the Conservatives are continuing a tradition of relying on divisive slogans and rhetoric.

As my colleagues and the minister herself pointed out this morning, we are open to amendments, as long as they are constructive and in the spirit of what we are trying to do, which is to fix the legislation that was passed in 2009.

[English]

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a very quick question for my hon. colleague, who gave an excellent speech. What is the importance of introducing this legislation right now?

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, we have been trying for a long time to get this through so we can right the wrongs of the past and fix what was put in place. I think it is important that we do this as quickly as possible.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that it is very important to pass this bill. Her government could have already done that, since it had a majority from 2015 to 2019. It knew both the problem and the solutions. This goes back to 2009.

Today, the government is telling us that we need to restore public confidence in our immigration system. We are not going to get there by recycling bills that have been dragging on for many years.

I would like an honest answer from my colleague. Does she really think that the bill will address the root of the problem within the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, which is the most dysfunctional department in the federal government?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, I am a little confused, because I heard my colleague speaking earlier and it sounded like he agrees with the bill that was introduced.

I would say that we are continuing our efforts in that direction. As a newly elected member, I am looking ahead to the future with our new government.

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member shared her family's story in the context of this bill.

Does she have any other stories she could share, perhaps in a different context, but still related to this bill?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, earlier I shared the story of one of my constituents whose child was born prematurely while he was travelling. Now the child is three months old and needs medical care. Unfortunately, he cannot get his Canadian citizenship because his parents were born abroad. This means he cannot receive medical care because the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, or RAMQ, refuses to issue him a health insurance card because he is not a Canadian citizen.

This issue is causing real problems for some children.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

IRAN

Hon. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the escalating war between Iran and Israel.

For almost five decades, the Iranian regime has repressed its own citizens and exported violence beyond its borders, yet this odious Iranian regime certainly belongs to the dustbin of history. This military confrontation, however, should be constrained by the principles of international law and not be permitted to devolve into wanton destruction.

The citizens of Iran are in a particularly precarious spot. They have endured decade upon decade of brutal repression, and the overwhelming majority detest the theocratic regime in Tehran, yet they are caught in the crossfire of a war they are not responsible for and that is not of their making, nor is the Iranian regime making any provisions for their safety.

That is why Canada should call on all parties to this dispute to exercise maximum restraint and also fully embrace the recently announced diplomatic initiative—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Heritage has the floor.

Statements by Members

SATI RANI KAUR

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is nearly a century in a minute. I rise today with a heavy yet grateful heart to honour my didu, Mrs. Sati Rani Kaur, who passed away peacefully at 94 on January 11 in Kolkata. Predeceased by my dadu, Mr. S. C. Kaur, she leaves behind three daughters; three sons-in-law; three grandchildren, including me; and three great-grandchildren. She was my last surviving grandparent, now with my father's parents, Hirenda Lal Majumdar and Sobhya Majumdar.

Didu's life was a tapestry woven through 94 years across British India and through decades of partition, liberation and decolonization. Raised in Bangladesh, she carried the resilience of a land shaped by struggle and independence. A Sanskrit scholar and educator, she taught students, including my father, in Rangoon before the turbulence of Burma's military junta, in Delhi amid India's fight for freedom and later in Kolkata, a city pulsing with a cultural re-birth.

Her strong will and Hindu heart defined her. She lived life on her own terms.

Om Shanti.

* * *

OAKVILLE FAMILY RIBFEST

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of Oakville's most anticipated community events, the Oakville Family Ribfest, starting today.

This annual celebration is made possible thanks to the tireless efforts of Oakville Lions Club and the Rotary Club of Oakville Trafalgar. Through the dedication of exceptional volunteers, Ribfest not only brings the community together but also raises critical funds to support our local charities. I also want to take a moment to recognize the incredible people of Oakville. Their generosity and community spirit are what make events like Ribfest so successful year after year.

Additionally, tomorrow I will be proud to welcome 70 bright students from Eastview Public School in my riding of Oakville West. These young leaders are the future of our country, and I look forward to sharing with them the important work we do here on behalf of all Canadians.

I would like to wish everyone a happy Canada Day.

* * *

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): [*Member spoke in Cree and provided the following text:*]

Neegan Ninaskomon Nohtwiynan kise manitou Kiya neegan kanigan nistamun oma waskigan Tansi Kitamskahtinawaw Kakiyaw Niwahkamahkanak Nahtohkitopi ekwa Wapikihew Nit-sikason Maskekosihek ekwa Amiskwaci waskihigan Ochi anoch Kinoteh kaskomtikohk Opaskahhopism nistano peyaksap kahkimeh Nehiway kisikaw

Statements by Members

[Member provided the following translation:]

First I acknowledge our father, our kind creator. Mr. Speaker, the leader of this House, hello greetings, all my relatives. My name is Sacred Rider White Eagle. I am from the Enoch Cree Nation and Edmonton. I acknowledge June 21 as National Indigenous Peoples Day.

[English]

National Indigenous Peoples Day is a day of celebration for many things, including leaders who have built bridges between Canadians and first peoples.

I acknowledge two teachers of mine: Okimaw Notha Willie Littlechild from Maskwacis, a former Conservative member of Parliament, our international chief, and truth and reconciliation commissioner; and Victor Houle from Onihcikiskwapowin, a public servant with decades of experience with Indigenous Services Canada. It is often those humble, hard-working public servants who make the difference in the mission toward honouring treaty, Victor being one of them.

From this side of the House, we wish all those trailblazers and all peoples a good Saturday this Saturday, National Indigenous Peoples Day.

* * *

• (1405)

[Translation]

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF VERDUN

Claude Guay (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of the parliamentary session and we head into summer, I invite all Canadians to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Verdun.

Our community is offering exceptional programming, including exhibitions, workshops and outdoor concerts with artists such as Clay and Friends and Orchestre Métropolitain. Each event reflects the vibrant spirit of Verdun.

I also have the great pleasure of announcing that, in August, our constituency office will be moving to Wellington Street, which was recently voted the coolest street in the world by *Timeout* magazine and which becomes a pedestrian-only street during the summer.

In closing, I want to thank Marie-Andrée Mauger, mayor of Verdun, who is ending 12 years of public service in our community. Her commitment will leave a green, compassionate and lasting legacy back home.

I wish Verdun a happy 150th anniversary, and I wish a happy summer to all.

* * *

[English]

ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 1955, a 22-year-old Italian man from Treviso, Italy, got on a boat and took that courageous trip across the Atlantic Ocean to Canada. He ended up settling in Woodbridge, Ontario. When he ar-

rived, he worked at a mushroom farm, then a steel factory, and then he started a business. He lived the Canadian dream. That man was my grandfather Nico Guglielmin, who passed away last year at the beautiful age of 95.

My grandfather truly was the inspiration in my life. He was strong and strict, full of decency and integrity, and he was also kind and understanding. He never lost his temper. No one ever saw him sweat. He was accomplished and qualified.

They say we can judge a person by what people say about them when they are gone. I say that Nico Guglielmin was a great man. He was a risk-taker who achieved his dreams, an entrepreneur of incredible accomplishment and a gentleman who carried himself throughout his life with dignity and honour.

I wish a happy Italian Heritage Month to the residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge and all Italian Canadians, like my grandfather Nico.

* * *

UKRAINE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking strong, targeted action to support the people of Ukraine and to hold Russia accountable for its ongoing war of aggression. In one of our most significant sanctions packages since the invasion began in 2022, we are imposing new sanctions on 77 individuals and 39 entities, and restricting trade on nearly 1,000 items, including those linked to chemical weapons, advanced technologies and critical industrial goods.

We are also expanding our crackdown on Russia's shadow fleet by listing over 200 additional vessels, now totalling more than 300, and banning all related services to disrupt Russia's global shipping networks.

Sanctions also target key financial institutions, energy companies and individuals enabling Russia's military and disinformation efforts. Canada stands firmly with the people of Ukraine as well as all those in the G7 whose courage and resilience continue to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

* * *

CHERI ELLIOTT

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as members rose and gave our first speeches in this place, we thanked our families and our volunteers for helping us get here. Now, as we carry out our legislative agenda, we rely on others to help us carry out our work. They do not often get the recognition they deserve. They are our staff.

On June 30, Cheri Elliott will retire after nearly 20 years of tireless service to our Conservative team. She began her journey in 2004 with Merv Tweed, the former member for Brandon—Souris, and went on to serve the hon. Vic Toews, the hon. Rob Nicholson and the hon. Candice Bergen, as well as Damien Kurek, and I can say his name today, and myself.

Last night's gathering showed that Cheri has been much more than a staffer. She has been a mentor, a friend and a trusted guide to many across the Hill.

For 15 years she also organized "Party Under the Stars", a non-partisan fundraiser supporting veterans and first responders through post-traumatic wellness programs. To Cheri, I give thanks from me and from Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

GENS DU PAYS

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on June 24, 1975, the celebrated poet of Natashquan chose the feast day of Saint-Jean, soon to become our national holiday, to bestow upon Quebecers a priceless treasure: a song they could all call their very own.

For 50 years now, whenever we celebrate a loved one's birthday around the dinner table or out at a restaurant with friends and family, we all raise our voices to sing Gilles Vigneault's lyrics featuring the name of the birthday boy or girl.

Nowhere else in the world are homes filled with the sound of this extraordinary song written to celebrate Quebec, a song we now use to celebrate each and every Quebecer. Vigneault's superbly poetic words speak directly to the heart:

All we have left, when all's said and done
Is the time we've taken to love one another
The care we have shown, the seeds we have sown
Will bloom in us forever
In the garden to which time has flown
People, o my people, it is your turn
To receive the love you've earned

[Members sang]

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

BETH HUNDEY

Peter Fragiskatos (London Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the extraordinary life of Beth Hundey, who passed away at the age of 40 this past April after a courageous battle with cancer. She was wife to Seneca and stepmother to Percy, cherished daughter of Rick and the late Jane Hundey, sister of Eric and Tim and their wives, Julie and Yvonne, and an aunt who was adored by her nieces and nephews.

Incredibly bright, she finished her PhD in geography at Western University in 2014. She later served as a professor at Western and was widely respected on campus and throughout Canada, in fact,

Statements by Members

for the innovations she made specifically in the area of curriculum development.

A passionate advocate for fighting climate change as well, Beth was loved, respected and admired. May she rest in peace.

* * *

WESTMINSTER WORKING GROUP

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the Westminster Working Group, a dedicated group of neighbours in London—Fanshawe, volunteers who have, for years, brought our community together to make it even better.

This is through hosting family-friendly events including free winter snowshoe rentals at Westminster Ponds, summer movies and yoga at Westminster Optimist Park and the Victoria Day weekend fireworks display at Nicholas Wilson Park. The Victoria Day weekend fireworks event has drawn over 1,000 Londoners. The group's commitment to creating accessible, family-friendly events fills our city with fun and fosters a neighbourly bond.

I would like to extend a warm invitation to everyone in this community and beyond, throughout London, to enjoy these wonderful activities. Again, I thank the Westminster Working Group.

* * *

NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was a true honour to lead a delegation of Canadian parliamentarians to Dayton, Ohio, for the spring session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, where parliamentarians from all NATO countries assembled for discussions.

Dayton was selected to honour the 30th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accord, which marked the end of the Bosnian War. Given the changing geopolitical situation and Canada's strong commitment to secure and defend our borders, the vital role that NATO plays cannot be understated. The Dayton session provided an excellent opportunity for NATO parliamentarians to reaffirm our support for Ukraine, that we must support Ukraine until it wins, and to lend our voice to creating a more resilient NATO.

I am proud that Canada announced increased defence spending, to 2% of our GDP by the end of this year. This means an additional \$9 billion of investment in our Canadian Armed Forces. We made a commitment to Canadians to protect our sovereignty and to defend our country, and we will do so, both today and for generations to come.

* * *

[Translation]

CLAIRE BELL

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, she does not know what the word "courage" means yet, but she personifies it. She does not know what determination is yet, but she embodies it. She cannot understand what resilience is, but she is a living example of it. She does not know what it means to stay calm yet, but she is a testament to it.

Oral Questions

Those words now have a name: Claire Bell, age three.

Today, all Canadians and my colleagues join me in thanking the hundreds of police officers and volunteers who did a tremendous job.

I hope Claire's childhood is filled with love, safety and kindness. I hope she has dreams and fulfills them, because with her strength, courage, determination and resilience, at the tender age of three, she has already proven that she is an exceptional person.

May she never forget, never doubt and always remember that the whole country was rooting for her.

* * *

● (1415)

YOUTH CORNER AT THE FÊTE AU VIEUX-VILLAGE IN SAINTE-JULIE

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about an inspiring 11-year-old boy from Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie. His name is Jacob, and I am very pleased to welcome him and his father to Parliament Hill.

The Fête au Vieux-Village was held a few weeks ago in Sainte-Julie. Jacob helped out by providing a space where young local people could make their mark and share their talents. Jacob made a determined effort, showing remarkable leadership and infectious enthusiasm. What I find the most compelling are his dreams for other young people. He says he would like to help kids his age by guiding them through their own entrepreneurial projects. At the Fête au Vieux-Village, the City of Sainte-Julie set up a space just for them. They were given their own table at the market, where they could proudly showcase and sell their products.

Jacob represents the future, a future defined by solidarity, creativity and commitment. I hope he continues to dream. This is only the beginning.

* * *

[English]

IRAN

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the violent revolution of 1979, the barbaric ayatollahs took over the prosperous and peaceful nation of Iran. They oppressed the great Persian people for almost 50 years. They murdered countless Jews and, recently, 58 Canadians. They are the world's largest state sponsor of terror.

The difference is simple: If given a chance, Iran would kill 10 million Israelis, but if it were up to Israel, the regime would fall and the new government would not beat women or hang gays. On June 13, the state of Israel lawfully defended itself and gave a gift to the world by ensuring that the psychos in Tehran do not get a nuclear weapon.

Now is the time for the great Persian people to reclaim their country, peacefully. Let the voices of the people rise. To my Persian friends, I say, "Do not be afraid." Let us work and pray for a free Iran.

DISCOVERY CENTRE

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Discovery Centre, a pillar of the Halifax community, which has evolved into a flagship Canadian export and global success. The Discovery Centre model, designed and engineered in Halifax, provides an accessible way for youth and community members to experience science and technology up close through immersive Canadian-made exhibits.

Under the leadership of Dov Bercovici and his incredible team, this initiative is now scaling globally, with eight new centres under way in Brazil and South America, and a national science centre in Sri Lanka. When complete, these new facilities will generate tens of millions of dollars in annual revenue and support new Canadian jobs. This is a clear example of trade diversification through innovation, and it is a bold reminder of the value we create when Canadians lead with impact.

The Discovery Centre is not just exporting exhibits; it is also exporting Canadian vision, values and talent in what is sure to be the first chapter in a much bigger story.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is continuing the Trudeau tradition of breaking his promises and hiding from accountability. He refuses to table a spring budget, while massively increasing government spending and keeping the Parliamentary Budget Officer in the dark, and just like Trudeau, he cannot even get a tax cut right. He promised \$800, yet the average Canadian will save only \$90 this year, which is not even enough to get a hot chocolate from Tim Hortons weekly.

Did the Prime Minister mislead Canadians during the election, is he misleading them now, or both?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the job of prime minister comes with many responsibilities; I did not know addition and division were one of them.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer refers to the reductions for all Canadians. The vote on which the members opposite supported the government delivers a tax cut for the 22 million Canadians who pay taxes and drive this country forward.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a guy who does not even do his own grocery shopping.

The Prime Minister is bragging about a \$90 tax cut this year, when his government's policies raised the cost of groceries \$800. He has broken all of his promises: spending, tax cuts and high-priced consultants, and he is all elbows down on the U.S. While he is begging on his knees in front of Trump, Canadians have high grocery prices, unaffordable homes and rising crime, but wait: Everyone should be grateful for a \$90 tax cut this year.

Why does the Prime Minister not just reverse his disastrous policies, drop his spring budget and actually lower taxes for Canadians?

● (1420)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, a tax cut is a cut for those who pay taxes. Twenty-two million Canadians pay taxes in this country. Eighty-six per cent of that tax cut goes to those in the first two tax brackets. For a two-earner family, the maximum tax cut is \$840 a year.

The members opposite think it is irrelevant, but it is relevant for Canadians; it is building the economy. We are glad they voted for it; they just happen to have forgotten now.

* * *

ETHICS

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night we learned that the Prime Minister has an entire department of bureaucrats trying to manage his conflicts of interest, but they cannot even tell us whether the Prime Minister has set up a conflict of interest screen, which means that the former chairman of a multi-billion dollar investment firm is sitting at the cabinet table and could be taking decisions that personally improve his financial standing. He has been Prime Minister for 100 days, but he is still jumping through ethics loopholes.

Why will the Prime Minister not stop hiding the truth from Canadians and come clean? What are your conflicts of interest?

The Speaker: I would remind the member to direct his question through the Chair.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the member opposite, I am proud of having experience in the private sector. I am proud of having experience helping to build this country. I am proud of having filed all my requirements in advance, before required, including a screen for conflict of interest.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Right Hon. Prime Minister, I am proud to have served our country in the Canadian Armed Forces in uniform.

The Prime Minister seems to do whatever he thinks he can get away with. He voted for the Liberals' ban on gas-powered cars, while Brookfield is heavily invested in the EV supply chain. We know that he used offshore tax havens in the Caribbean to avoid paying Canadian taxes. His own department will not even say whether he set up conflict of interest screens.

Oral Questions

Instead of maligning people who serve the country in uniform, why does the Prime Minister not stand up and come clean about his conflicts of interest?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud, as Prime Minister, to have made the biggest investment in our military in decades. I am proud to be reversing the decades of cuts from members opposite.

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[Translation]

TAXATION

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the Prime Minister and the Liberals promised to lower taxes for families. For an average family, that meant saving \$825. The Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report today. The actual amount is \$250, not \$825. That is less than a third of what was expected.

The Prime Minister is an honourable man, to say the least. Could he stand up and apologize to Canadians for misleading them?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between average and maximum. The maximum is indeed \$840 per year.

This is a tax cut for 22 million Canadians. I thank members for supporting this measure.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not being truthful. The problem is that, on average, Canadians will barely get \$90, while low-income seniors will be getting about \$50, which is not even a dollar a week.

When the Prime Minister was head of Brookfield, if a director came and told him that they had a plan to make good cuts and then did not deliver the goods and gave three and a half times less than forecast, would he say, "Hooray, let us keep going"?

Would he not instead ask them why they misled him?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the future of both young and older Canadians is one where we are going to build this great country with one Canadian economy.

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when talking about the connection between tariffs and bulldozer Bill C-5, two of the Prime Minister's colleagues responded by spewing nonsense, trying to come across as charming and funny, which they are not.

I do not believe that there is any connection between the tariff crisis and the time needed for Bill C-5 to eventually take effect.

I would like the economist and Prime Minister to explain the connection between the immediate tariff crisis and Bill C-5.

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a direct link to the steel and aluminum industry. There are surpluses because of the U.S. tariff war. Bill C-5 will create demand for Canadian steel and aluminum to build major infrastructure in Quebec and across Canada for good jobs.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government considers it a feat to hypothetically reduce the assessment period to two years. No shovels have been put in the ground yet. There are still a great many years before projects are built. Take Trans Mountain, for example. That took 12 years.

The tariff crisis was an emergency. The Prime Minister is talking about a solution that will not require a pound of aluminum for 10, 12 or 15 years. Where is that solution of his?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is one of the reasons this process needs to be tightened up. The processes take too long for major projects.

With confidence, we are going to produce steel and aluminum and create jobs here in Canada, starting this summer.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to managing the tariffs file, let us remember that, after making a bunch of compromises on borders, on defence, and on the abandoned countermeasures that may now be back on the table—and I am curious to see the details, as they have already done more harm than good—the Prime Minister's strategy was supposed involve reaching an agreement with Donald Trump before the G7, because it is urgent.

He is serving up projects that are much more focused on oil than on aluminum or steel. He is telling us that we will see things happen this summer and that we will not believe our eyes.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his strategy is a failure?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Canada-U.S. trade, over 90% of our exports to the U.S. are duty-free. That is a success. We are the only country in the world to have achieved such success.

However, we are not satisfied. We need to find markets, and we need to come up with fair arrangements with the Americans for the steel, aluminum and auto industries.

[English]

FINANCE

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Prime Minister does not buy his own groceries, but most families do, and what they are seeing at the grocery store is ever-increasing food prices.

According to Canada's fiscal watchdog, the Liberals' newest broken promise is on their tax cut, with the average Canadian saving only \$90 this year, well below the \$825 promised. This is not even enough for a week's groceries.

Did the Prime Minister mislead Canadians during the election? Is he misleading them now, or both?

● (1430)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit rich for the opposition members to be talking about leaders who do not buy groceries while they have a leader who is in subsidized housing and not buying groceries.

However, I will say that this government is laser-focused on making sure Canadians have what they need. As we know, poverty rates have been going down since 2015. That is because of our investments in Canadians through programs like dental care, affordable child care and the Canada child benefit. We will build the strongest economy in the G7.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is a broken record of broken promises. He said that we should judge him by the price at the grocery store and that he is the man with a plan. He is failing. Since the start of this year, beef is up 34%, oranges are up 26%, apples are up 18% and baby formula is up 9%. This is making it harder for families trying to put nutritious food on the table.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and table a budget that actually cuts taxes and reverses his inflationary policies?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government was selected by Canadians to deliver. We are cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians. We are permanently cutting the carbon tax. We are cutting taxes for first-time homebuyers. Our focus is on building the strongest economy in the G7. I ask the party and the members opposite to join us and get on board.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, old habits die hard. The Prime Minister promised to cut consulting fees but is now raising them by 37% to a record-smashing \$26 billion this year. That is \$1,400 for every Canadian household. He is doing it knowing that Canadians have not received value for money from these Liberal insiders.

Why is the Prime Minister breaking his promise and increasing spending on consultants?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are reducing the use of external consultants while making sure our public service has the tools and the expertise to deliver on the essential missions it has for Canadians.

I am very proud to have been elected on a mandate to make government more efficient so that we can invest more: invest more in defence, invest more in innovation and invest more in the supports that Canadians need.

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is more broken promises with the Prime Minister, broken promises on spending, on tax cuts, on defence, on elbows up with the U.S., and now on consultants. While offering Canadians a meagre \$90 tax cut this year, he is not getting the money back from GC Strategies and is paying yet another consultant to update websites for an undisclosed fee. It is billions for consultants and peanuts for Canadians.

Why is the Prime Minister giving consultants so much and Canadians so little?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Prime Minister announced a \$9.3-billion investment in Canada's defence, which means we will achieve NATO's 2% target this fiscal year. This is not only an investment in our armed forces, but also an investment in good-paying jobs, in Canadian innovation and in economic growth, and the member knows this. Our generational investment is strengthening Canada's role as a strong, reliable international partner in NATO while rebuilding and rearming our terrific Canadian Armed Forces right here at home.

* * *

FINANCE

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even the government's own fiscal watchdog said that he is in the dark on the government's financial plans. He would not even comment on whether the finances are sustainable and is in the dark on how the Liberals are going to pay for nearly half a trillion dollars. It is not enough to have a plan but not know how they are going to pay for it. Perhaps they do not want their broken promises and ballooning deficits to come to light.

There is no private sector discipline here, only secrecy, broken promises and no budget. What exactly are they afraid Canadians will find in the numbers?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last time

Oral Questions

I checked, I think we were elected on a bold agenda of change: to cut taxes, to fight against illegal tariffs, to bring this country together and build one strong economy. The rhetoric I hear across the way is the same old politics that former member Pierre Poilievre and the Conservatives peddled for two decades.

In the ballot box, just as in business, if people do not deliver after two decades, they lose their job. He lost his job. We have our jobs. We are elected. We are here to build the strongest, most resilient—

● (1435)

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata.

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TAXATION

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised Canadians \$825 a year in tax cuts. As the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed, this was another broken promise. The average Canadian will save \$90 this year. That amounts to about \$7 a month. For low-income seniors, the situation is even worse. They get \$50 a year, or about \$4 to \$5 a month. It is crazy. That is not enough to buy a cup of coffee.

Did the Prime Minister mislead Canadians during the election? Is he misleading them today as well? Is it both?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it fascinates me to hear this question from a Conservative who voted against the Canada child benefit, against the Canadian dental care plan and against thousands of child care spaces for Quebecers.

Now the Conservatives have come to their senses. They supported us on this tax cut, which is important to 22 million Canadians. I am very proud that we are implementing it.

* * *

FINANCE

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister is full of broken promises: taxes, spending, consultants, U.S. relations. The list goes on.

Oral Questions

Meanwhile, Canadians are paying more and more at the grocery store. The price of beef is up 34%, oranges are up 26%, apples are up 18%, and infant formula is up almost 9%. Enough with the rhetoric and the broken promises.

Will the Prime Minister finally table a real budget, lower taxes and reverse his inflationary policies?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first bill we passed will lower taxes for 22 million Canadians. That will have a direct impact on millions of Canadians across the country, with a tax cut of \$840 per family. We are very proud of that. That is direct support for Canadians. That is exactly what we were elected to do, and that is exactly what we have done.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, guess who is thrilled about Bill C-5, apart from the Conservatives and the oil companies. Brookfield is thrilled. The Prime Minister's former firm is getting quite the assist from the Liberals. Brookfield owns a company that produces nuclear reactors. Bill C-5 deals with that. Brookfield owns natural gas processing plants. Bill C-5 deals with that. Brookfield owns pipelines and has interests in the oil sands. Bill C-5 deals with that.

Is the Prime Minister imposing a gag order on Bill C-5 in order to please Brookfield shareholders of which he is one?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will tell you who is proud of Bill C-5, and that is aluminum workers in Quebec, who are represented by 44 members of this government from Quebec. Steel workers in Ontario are also proud of this bill, since their jobs are currently at risk because of a tariff war with the Americans.

Rather than pointing fingers, the Bloc Québécois should acknowledge that we are in a tariff war and help us come up with solutions.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister says she is speaking on behalf of workers, but perhaps she does not know that the Confédération des syndicats nationaux has spoken out against Bill C-5.

If the Prime Minister were transparent about his assets, nobody would be asking these questions. Unfortunately, we have no other choice than to challenge the closure motion because the Prime Minister himself stands to benefit from this bill. He should be the first to demand a thorough study of Bill C-5. He should be the first to refuse to exempt developers, such as Brookfield, from laws by order in council. He should be the first to tackle any perceived conflict of interest.

Will he let Parliament do its job?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand why the Bloc Québécois is not interested in building one strong Canadian economy. However, I find it harder to understand why the Bloc is

opposed to the kind of major projects that Quebeckers are dreaming of, such as generating hydroelectricity, building infrastructure and uniting this country to create job opportunities.

Instead of throwing around baseless insults that are beneath him, the member should get onboard so that we can build one economy together and give Quebeckers opportunities.

* * *

• (1440)

[English]

TAXATION

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's fiscal watchdog confirms another broken Liberal promise, this time on the Liberals' tax cut. On the campaign trail, the Prime Minister promised Canadians an \$800 income tax cut, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer just confirmed that the average Canadian will save \$15 a month, and low-income seniors will save only \$10 a month, which will not buy a gallon of milk from the Lumsden co-op.

Why did the Prime Minister mislead Canadians in the last election?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that member of Parliament, and we thank him for it, and his entire caucus voted for the exact tax cut we committed to for Canadians by July 1, so that on July 1, in every pay stub in Canada, everyone who pays income tax will have a reduction from 15% to 14% in the first tax bracket. That will put up to \$840 in the pockets of Canadian families. Happy Canada Day. We are delivering for Canadians.

* * *

HOUSING

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is sad but true, Canadians are getting used to being misled by that Liberal in particular.

Moving on to another Liberal failure, a damning new report from the Liberals' own housing agency has declared the death of housing affordability in our country. It said that Canada needs to double housing construction to restore affordability, but the Liberals' record is dismal. Housing starts in Vancouver are down 10%; in Toronto, down 58%; in Guelph, down 78%; in Hamilton, down 50%; in London, down 72%.

It is a simple question. When will the housing minister stop buying investment properties and start building homes for Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will caution the member opposite. He is leaving out all of the Canadian communities that are increasing their housing starts right now. Housing starts across Canada are near record levels. That is good news to celebrate, but it is just a start for us.

Canadians elected the party that was running to double housing construction in Canada. We hope you will support us on that.

The Speaker: I remind the minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Riding Mountain.

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a damning report by the government's own housing agency revealed that Canada needs to double housing construction in 10 years to restore affordability. In the last year, housing starts are down over 10% in Vancouver, down 50% in Hamilton, down over 58% in Toronto and down a whopping 78% in Guelph. The government's record on building bureaucracy instead of homes has failed young Canadians.

When will the Liberals admit they have killed the dream of home ownership in Canada?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are laser-focused on doubling housing construction across Canada. I am encouraged to hear the members' opposite new-found concerns about housing construction and affordability, particularly given that they voted against every significant housing program in the last few decades. Our hope now is that they will support us to double construction and vote for affordable housing in Canada.

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[Translation]

TAXATION

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we just came out of an election where the Liberals promised the moon to get elected. Their hypocrisy is catching up with them. They were strutting around with promises of giving Canadians \$800. Today we get the truth straight out of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's mouth.

Honest people were taken for a ride. Instead of getting \$800, they are getting \$90. This Prime Minister misled Canadians.

Why did he do that?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is preposterous.

The member knows full well that 22 million people will be getting a tax cut after July 1; at the very least, he voted in favour of a bill that lowers taxes for all Canadians. Their paycheque will show a tax cut somewhere between 15% and 40% in the first bracket. That represents up to \$840 for a Canadian family.

That is what we promised to do. That is what we have done.

• (1445)

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have something to say to my colleague.

The Conservatives, like Canadians, were taken for a ride. The Liberals lied to us. I invite this Liberal government—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The member is close to crossing the line. I know that he is a good debater, but there is no need to go too far.

That said, he can have the floor again.

Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I dare say the Liberals have not been truthful. This Liberal government said one thing during the election and is now doing the opposite.

After only two months, the Liberals have broken their promise to cut spending, taxes, consulting and defence fees, and they have ruined relations with the United States.

Those are the facts. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer says he was in a—

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is an incredible question.

When I think that, two months ago, when they had the opportunity to present a plan to Canadians and they came out with their so-called costed platform, there was only one number that was not demolished by practicably everyone in the country and that is 17. There were 17 photos of their leader, which is more than Canadians asked for.

On this side of the House, we are committed to cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians. That is exactly what we are delivering. It will have a positive impact on my colleague's riding, my riding, Quebec and the entire country.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the world is becoming an increasingly dangerous and uncertain place, from rising geopolitical tension and economic instability to the impacts of climate change and conflict, yet Canadians can be confident that their government is putting their safety, security and prosperity first by working closely with our allies and defending the values that matter to us.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs update the House on Canada's engagement at the G7 and how we are working with partners to build a more secure and stable world?

Oral Questions

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada just concluded hosting an extremely successful G7 summit in Alberta at Kananaskis. The world is becoming more unpredictable, and the world needs Canada's leadership.

The Prime Minister and his colleagues signed joint statements on critical minerals, on energy security and on transnational crime. The world needs more Canada. Canada is ready to lead.

[Translation]

Long live Canada!

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' catch-and-release policies are so bad that mayors and city councillors are pre-emptively writing letters to Crown counsel begging them to keep the bad guys in jail. Mayor Rathor of Williams Lake recently wrote, "We vehemently oppose Jacob Daniel FUNK's release.... The actions of this individual have put our residents and property at significant risk." He said that when Jacob Funk is in jail, the crime rate goes down; when he is out, the crime rate goes up.

Why does the Prime Minister keep putting the rights of criminals ahead of those of Canadians?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are making it tougher for violent criminals to get out on bail and imposing stricter sentences for repeat offenders, but let me be clear: There is nothing in the law stopping judges and JPs from denying bail. The current law is that people who are a risk to public safety or a flight risk should not be given bail.

What is really going on here? Reports are saying that judges are making decisions because the provinces are not providing the space needed to hold criminals. It is time for the provinces to join us and step up.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always somebody else's fault.

Jacob Funk has been arrested 37 times, and 37 times he has been released, over nine times in the past month. On April 27, it was assault with a weapon and uttering threats. On May 27, it was break and enter and disguising face. On June 8, it was assaulting a peace officer, resisting arrest and breach of release. On June 12, it was assault and uttering death threats.

He is wreaking havoc on the citizens of Williams Lake, and the Prime Minister is letting him. When will he repeal his soft-on-crime policies and finally put victims' rights ahead of those of criminals?

• (1450)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are on the same page. Repeat violent offenders should not be released, so let me be clear again: There is nothing stopping judges and JPs from denying bail. The current law states that people who are a risk to public safety or a flight risk should not be given bail.

I think it is time for the provinces to step up. What is happening? Let us make sure that Crown prosecutors are well funded and make sure there is space to hold these criminals. We are going to do our part; the provinces should do theirs.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, crime has been rising in my riding since the Liberals formed government, and justice is too often delayed for victims. According to the latest Owen Sound Police Service's annual report, violent crimes are up 14.6%. My communities are worried. To make matters worse, more than 10% of the cases are now exceeding the Jordan limit, delaying justice further.

When will the Liberal government reverse its soft-on-crime legislation and adopt a common-sense plan to keep violent offenders behind bars and ensure victims and their families get the justice they deserve?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news to report. Canadians elected a new Liberal government, in part on the promise to advance reforms that will stiffen bail proceedings and adopt more serious sentences for violent repeat offenders. In addition to the changes to the Criminal Code that the member should expect to see later this calendar year, we are making investments to give law enforcement the tools they need to prevent crimes in the first place.

I am willing to work with members on all sides of the aisle to advance these important reforms to help keep communities safe.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this old cabinet minister has not answered the question. Premiers, police organizations and victims are pleading for tougher penalties for repeat violent offenders. Just last week, West Grey police rearrested a repeat violent offender for failing to comply with a release order and who was found in possession of fentanyl and prohibited weapons.

The Prime Minister ran on a platform that included establishing a reverse onus for severe crimes and increasing penalties. Can the minister provide specific timelines as to when the government will implement these changes and reverse its soft-on-crime policies?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when dangerous people who pose a threat to the public commit serious offences, they should be treated with the concomitant sentencing and bail decisions from the courts.

We are going to be advancing reforms that we campaigned on in the fall. We intend, specifically, to change the bail rules as they pertain to home invasions, auto theft and organized crime. We will also advance new sentences when it comes to violent repeat offenders and, again, those participating in organized crime.

I hope rather than just resorting to rhetoric in the House of Commons, they will actually work across partisan lines to advance the kinds of reforms Canadians are calling for so we can help—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Cambridge.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is like we are living in a Liberal rerun of Groundhog Day where the same criminals get arrested and released and reoffend on a loop.

In Cambridge, two men wanted on warrants were just busted with weapons and suspected fentanyl, a drug that is killing Canadians every single day. This endless cycle is not an accident; it is the result of Liberal-made soft-on-crime laws, a revolving door of justice that is a gift to repeat offenders.

When will the Liberal government shut the door on its Groundhog Day and finally put violent criminals and drug kingpins behind bars for good?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fentanyl has torn through communities and ripped apart families. We are working to take down the fentanyl trade and gangs that profit from it. We have listed seven cartels as terrorist entities under the Criminal Code. I am working closely with Kevin Brosseau, Canada's fentanyl czar, to put a laser-sharp focus on dismantling these drug networks.

We will shut down fentanyl production and put those profiting from it behind bars.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, violent crime continues to spiral out of control under the Liberals, devastating our families and communities.

In Brandon earlier this year, a 67-year-old man was beaten over the head with a baseball bat by a repeat offender out on bail, completely unprovoked. Weeks later, a woman was assaulted in an elevator by an individual out on bail facing similar previous charges. These are just two examples of far too many violent assaults by repeat offenders released to wander our streets.

When are the Liberals going to get serious, reject their soft-on-crime agenda, repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, and put these criminals in jail, not out on bail?

• (1455)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this new government's agenda is to be tough on crime. We are going to make it tougher for violent criminals to get bail and will impose stricter sentences for repeat offenders.

Oral Questions

The topic of bail keeps coming up. It is the job of provinces to administer the bail system. Right now, the law states that people who are a risk to public safety or are a flight risk should not be given bail. The provinces really need to take a look at what is happening in their courtrooms.

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, extortion is up 357%. Earlier this week, an Abbotsford man was gunned down because of extortion. Following his death, there was another extortion-related shooting in the area. Yesterday, in B.C.'s Lower Mainland, another home was shot at. Thankfully, this time no one was injured.

Every neighbourhood is terrified and innocent lives are on the line. The Liberals eliminated mandatory minimums for extortion with a firearm. How many more lives must be taken by extortion before the Liberals put a minimum sentence back on extortion?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my hon. colleague that extortion is illegal in Canada, and those who perpetrate it should be apprehended and punished to the full extent of the law.

Specifically, if the hon. member examines this section of the Criminal Code, he will see that there are mandatory minimums when it comes to certain offences committed with a firearm relating to extortion. Moreover, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for life. The rules reflect the seriousness with which the government takes extortion.

We look forward to working with law enforcement to give them the tools they need to investigate these crimes and prevent them from taking place in the first instance.

Amanpreet Gill (Calgary Skyview, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's crime rate is up. Homicide is up 28%, violent crime is up 50% and extortion is up 357%.

This week, CSIS reported foreign governments are using organized criminal networks to target Canadians. Our own intelligence agency is sounding the alarm, but the Liberals are ignoring it. They voted against Conservative Bill C-381, which was for jail, not bail, for repeat offenders.

Will the Prime Minister finally take public safety seriously by adopting our Conservative plan to lock up these violent criminals?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, foreign interference and transnational repression are serious threats to Canadians and our democratic institutions. Through the Countering Foreign Interference Act, we have the modern tools needed to protect against them. We will train 1,000 new RCMP personnel, who will help combat foreign interference and transnational repression. We will remain vigilant to protect our security, to protect our sovereignty and to protect our democracy.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is worse, the minister for crime reduction blaming the provinces for enforcing bad bail laws or the justice minister making witty statements like “extortion is illegal”. Anyone with a fifth grade education or higher knows that.

The problem is that extortion is up 357%, and violent extortionists get out on bail almost the next day. That is the problem, not that extortion is illegal. Everyone knows that.

The real question is this: Are the Liberals actually going to do something? The minister is saying they will do something in the fall, so it is a summer of free crime. Canadians need changes now. Will the Liberals do it, yes or no?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives talk a big game when it comes to a tough-on-crime agenda, but they fail to point out that one of their members, earlier this week, put a motion before the justice committee that would make it easier for those charged with intimate partner violence to be released on bail.

We were elected on a campaign commitment to put forward rules that would strengthen the bail system, including, specifically, for offences tied to auto theft, home invasion, human trafficking and organized crime, and to stiffen sentences for violent repeat offenders.

If we could take the politics out of this issue, we would be happy to work together to advance the public safety of this country. That is what Canadians demand, and with or without the Conservatives, the Liberal government will deliver.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Saturday, June 21, is National Indigenous Peoples Day, a day in which Canadians celebrate the cultures, unique histories and traditions of the indigenous peoples of Canada. Can the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations share more on the importance of National Indigenous Peoples Day?

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his hard work in his riding Honoré-Mercier.

This Saturday, I am looking forward to celebrating National Indigenous Peoples Day in Yellowknife at the North Slave Métis Alliance's annual community fish fry, which will also showcase entertainment and the vibrant cultures of indigenous peoples, both locally and nationally.

I give my sincere thanks to the North Slave Métis for hosting and to Heritage Canada for its continued support of community celebrations like this across the country. I encourage all residents and colleagues to take part in the festivities. It is an opportunity to celebrate the rich history, diverse heritage and enduring strength of first nations, Inuit and Métis—

● (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Prince Albert.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a time when Canada should be expanding energy production, the Liberals are using their anti-energy laws to stop pipeline construction. Companies that have wanted to build have not because of these laws.

For 10 years now, the government has driven away investments and stranded our energy sector. It is time for anti-energy laws like Bill C-69, the shipping ban and the job-killing industrial carbon tax to go. If the Liberal government really wants to see energy projects built, will it finally do the right thing for Canadians and repeal its anti-energy laws?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the government will do is present the one Canadian economy bill to rapidly advance projects of national interest and build one Canadian economy, not 13. The bill would grow our economy and support our sovereignty to ensure that we build the strongest economy in the G7.

I hope our colleagues across the aisle will support us.

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OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, Canada hosted the G7, and one of the people on the Prime Minister's invitation list was the crown prince of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia currently has a sweetheart deal with Canada, shipping over two billion dollars' worth of Saudi oil a year to our Canadian east coast.

Alberta oil, shipped to the same place, would face extremely onerous reporting requirements on upstream and downstream emissions, yet no such requirements exist for Saudi oil. Why?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going to support our conventional and renewable energy business by getting the one Canadian economy act passed. It would grow our conventional energy business. It would grow our renewable business.

We hope that colleagues across the aisle will get on board.

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will note that the Liberal members seem incapable of using the words “pipeline” or “oil” in the House of Commons.

Let me keep this simple: It is a fact that the emissions reporting requirement on Saudi oil being sold in Canada is less stringent than for Canadian oil being sold in Canada. Who in the Liberal government wants to stand now to defend this incomprehensible policy?

Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Of course, Mr. Speaker, we support oil and the development of all energy options across this great country, but we also support the indigenous community because we realize, as a country, we must engage the indigenous community. Even for them, this is a journey of economic and social justice. The benefits of anything we do, oil, gas or development, that engages indigenous people will be long-lasting.

We must reach all the people of our great country, including the indigenous community, in every corner of our country.

* * *

LABOUR

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, our government took action. Yes, we took action to strengthen workers' rights by introducing legislation to ban replacement workers during strikes and lockouts.

Can the Minister of Jobs and Families update the House on this important step for workers and collective bargaining?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an important question, and I have great news: Bill C-58 comes into force this Friday. Using replacement workers compromises the fundamental right to strike. It can tip the scales, derail good-faith bargaining and heighten tensions in the workplace. Bill C-58 bans replacement workers, something that the Canadian labour movement, for a long time, has been asking for.

The government got it done, together with labour, and we are very happy for this work with Canadian workers.

* * *

● (1505)

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's number one export is oil. It is a source of prosperity and provides for health care, infrastructure and good-paying jobs, yet 10 years of Liberal anti-energy laws have kept pipelines from being built and have kept us dependent upon the U.S. markets, with laws like Bill C-69, the no new pipelines act; Bill C-48, the shipping ban; the energy production cap; and the industrial carbon tax. Energy companies will not build, because of these laws.

When will the Liberals finally end their war on Canadian energy and jobs?

Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem with the Conservatives is that half of them do not like Poilievre, the other half like Poilievre

and the other half cannot count. They ought to look at Canada as a country with the third-largest—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. secretary of state has the floor.

Hon. Buckley Belanger: Mr. Speaker, Canada is the third-largest oil-producing country in the world. That is something we should be proud of.

In Saskatchewan, where I come from, we have a phrase: Lead, follow, or get out of the way. These guys cannot lead, and they are too arrogant to follow, so they should at least get out of the way.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal and Conservative coalition joined hands to fast-track Bill C-5 to bypass environmental reviews, ignore provincial jurisdiction and trample on the constitutional rights of indigenous peoples.

Ontario chiefs are rejecting Bill C-5. UBCIC Grand Chief Stewart Phillip called it a “complete betrayal of Canada’s commitments under the UN Declaration [on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples]”. The assembly unanimously condemned the bill and is calling for its immediate withdrawal. Chiefs across the country are saying, “nothing’s off the table” if the bill is passed.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and withdraw Bill C-5?

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will be looking for projects that have indigenous support and, even better, indigenous equity in the projects.

The legislation is about supporting projects that are not only shovel-ready but also shovel-worthy, projects that respect indigenous knowledge and uphold aboriginal and treaty rights. The legislation mandates that there must be meaningful consultation and accommodation with indigenous rights holders during both the process of determining which projects are in the national interest and the development of rigorous conditions for each project.

Business of the House

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, indigenous rights holders and civil society groups have been clear: Bill C-5 would violate constitutional rights, escalate the climate crisis and endanger workers' health and safety, but the Liberals and Conservatives are teaming up to pass the bill without proper consultations. The AFN, the ITK and NAN have indicated that it is an ungracious invitation to the Supreme Court. This will stall our economy and the creation of good jobs.

Will the Liberal government uphold its constitutional obligations and keep the bill out of the courts?

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these rights are affirmed by the Constitution, and the duty to consult and accommodate has been set out in a series of Supreme Court of Canada decisions. The one Canadian economy act, specifically, in both the preamble and throughout the body of the legislation, would require the government to consult with indigenous rights holders, at clauses 5(7), 7(2) and 8(3).

Again, we will be consulting with indigenous rights holders.

* * *

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Parliamentarians, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of an anniversary that is of great importance to our parliamentary family. June 23 will mark the 10th anniversary of the official creation of the Parliamentary Protective Service.

• (1510)

[English]

Throughout the 10 years of its existence, the Parliamentary Protective Service has anticipated and adapted to emerging and growing threats, while always remaining true to its values of respect, professionalism, integrity, accountability and leadership. The PPS values are the ones that keep us safe, and for that we are most grateful.

For the last 10 years, day after day, these women and men in uniform have been keeping parliamentarians and Parliament safe, and by extension, keeping Canada's democracy strong. With smiles and hellos, they help us start and end each day.

[Translation]

Of course, the Parliament of Canada is more than a workplace; it is the seat of Canadian democracy and attracts visitors from around the world. Our colleagues in uniform welcome these visitors with Canada's trademark civility and courtesy. While the House of Commons is a workplace for parliamentarians and employees, it is also a sacred space for democracy, belonging to every Canadian. As we all know, protecting democracy is no easy task.

[English]

Let me now draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of many members of the Parliamentary Protective Service.

I am thankful for their long service, their bravery, their achievement and their commitment to PPS.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

The Speaker: I want to thank them and congratulate them on this important anniversary. I wish them a happy 10th anniversary.

[English]

* * *

[Translation]

POLICE WORK

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the House recognize the impressive work of the Sûreté du Québec and Ontario Provincial Police in the last few days following the disappearance of little Claire Bell.

That it salute and thank the hundreds of volunteer, witnesses and groups who offered their support for the search operations and contributed in one way or another to the successful resolution of this case.

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.

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

(Motion agreed to)

Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, during question period, there was talk of tax cuts. Numbers were thrown around. The Prime Minister, among others, talked about \$840.

I seek unanimous consent to table the Parliamentary Budget Officer's document, which in no way includes—

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is the last Thursday projected before the summer recess, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the House administration, which has supported members of Parliament as they resumed their duties after the election.

There was a lot to do to get so many new members of Parliament sworn in and oriented and ready to go for this session. I just want to commend the Clerk's team and all the procedural staff who are involved in that. I know that there are a lot of moving pieces; once again, they discharged their duties with great proficiency, and we all certainly appreciate that.

I would also like to pay tribute to the pages, as this is the final week in their program. They have done excellent work throughout the past few months. They have had a little bit more time off this session, with the prorogation and the election, than other page cohorts, but they have done exceptional work as well and, again, served parliamentarians in a non-partisan and professional way. I wish them good luck with the rest of their studies, and I hope they have enjoyed their tenure here in the House of Commons of Canada.

I would like to thank my government counterpart.

[Translation]

I would also like to thank the leader of the Bloc Québécois for working with me over the past few weeks.

[English]

We have always been able to have professional meetings. Although we do not often agree on much, in terms of policy, we do recognize that Parliament has to function on behalf of Canadians.

In that light, I wonder if the government House leader could update us. There is only a day left in the calendar. Maybe, in that time, the government might bring forward a budget so that it can show Canadians how it is going to manage all of this spending and borrowing that it has racked up.

My counterpart, the government House leader, was quite animated yesterday, telling Canadians that they have the choice of filling up their car with gas or diesel. That choice is soon coming to an end. Kicking in next year will be the Liberal ban on internal combustion engines. Maybe they would like to repeal that ban in the remaining days, since he seems to love filling up his car with gas so much. Maybe he would like to continue to enjoy that right in the years to come, and maybe they will bring in legislation to repeal that very ban.

I can tell him that if he is about to answer yes to that, I promise that Conservatives will fast-track any such legislation to preserve the rights of Canadians to fill up their cars with gas long into the future.

If he likes, I can even table the departmental regulations that show this ban is starting next year and that, by 2035, 100% of vehicles sold in Canada must be electric vehicles. That would add massive costs for Canadians hoping to purchase a conventional gas or diesel vehicle.

In that light, I would like to ask him if he could answer that very specific question and wish him a very good summer as he returns to his constituency and spends time with his family.

• (1515)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a backhanded

Business of the House

compliment if I ever heard one. I can think of one internal combustion engine that my hon. colleague could maybe come help me with, and I could go help him with his, and that is the lawnmower. We will be ripping the cord on that after a long session. We will be ripping the cord on the internal combustion lawnmower and getting caught up on some household duties.

I want to echo everything that my hon. colleague said and thank all the parliamentary staff, the Speaker, the clerks, all the personnel who support the table, the cafeteria, the food service staff and, of course, the PPS. I congratulate them on their 10th anniversary and echo everything said about the pages. I thank them for their service and thank them for their time here. We have been delighted to have them and wish them well as their studies progress.

I also want to thank the members of the official opposition, the official opposition chief whip and the opposition House leader.

[Translation]

I also want to thank the House leader of the Bloc Québécois and the whip of the Bloc Québécois. There is also the former whip whom I still see in the House, and I know that she is giving very good advice to her successor. I also thank the NDP and the Green Party and all their teams. There are a lot of people who support us in our respective roles, and that is very important.

[English]

I want to single one person out. I am sure the opposition House leader will indulge me.

I want to thank Sarah Leclair. Thank God she was there. I thank her for supporting the Liberal caucus, the Liberal government for these years. We wish her well as she relocates to another part of our great nation.

[Translation]

Returning to the matter at hand, this afternoon we will resume debate at second reading of Bill C-3, an act to amend the Citizenship Act. As per our solemn promise to the people of Canada, tomorrow we will begin the debate at report stage and at third reading of Bill C-5, an act to enact the free trade and labour mobility in Canada act and the building Canada act, which hopefully will be delivered to Canadians in time for Canada Day, along with the income tax cut, which will benefit 22 million Canadians as of July 1.

I wish a happy Canada Day to our great country and all the people who call it home.

Government Orders

● (1520)

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the chief whip of the Bloc Québécois, I too would like to take this opportunity to thank the other members of the House. Although we do not always agree, we still manage to get things done. We have also been much better at moving issues forward over the past month than in previous months.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and your team of Deputy Speakers, who learned their duties quickly and are doing a great job. I would also like to thank the team of House clerks and all the employees who work with them. We in the Bloc Québécois appreciate them. I think that the House of Commons staff in general are aware of this. We greatly appreciate the outstanding and impeccable service that is being delivered in this Parliament. It was a pleasant surprise for most of us when we arrived. That is just a comment.

I would also like to thank the people in the Parliamentary Protective Service. The service's 10th anniversary has already been highlighted. These are people who dedicate themselves to protecting us. That means a lot. We appreciate that, we thank them, and we wish them continued success. I would also like to thank the maintenance staff and the janitors we meet in our offices. We are often in a hurry and may not always greet them, but they deserve our respect. If they were not here, we would not be here. What we do on Parliament Hill is a group effort, so I would like to thank everyone. I hope I have not forgotten any groups.

Of course, I have to end with the most important group for us francophones: the interpreters. Despite the sometimes heated debates, where people are talking at the same time, the interpreters do an extraordinary job, of impeccable quality. It is truly impressive to see the extent to which they can convey, in real time, what are sometimes highly complex or technical remarks, especially at committee meetings. I did not mention the staff assigned to committees. I think they are included in the House staff.

I wish all of these people a very good summer.

We are off to celebrate Quebec's national holiday.

I wish Canadians everywhere a happy Canada Day.

See you again next fall.

[English]

The Speaker: Colleagues, as we prepare to focus on our families and our constituents, I also want to take a moment to thank all those who have made it possible for us to do our work here in the House of Commons.

[Translation]

On behalf of all members, I sincerely thank administration employees; our work would have ground to a halt without them. I thank the interpreters, the IT team, the maintenance staff, the clerks, the pages and the broadcasting team. I also thank the members of the Parliamentary Protective Service who show up every day to keep us safe. Their service is inspiring, and we appreciate them always.

[English]

All of us, members and especially those who support them, have earned a break. I wish everyone a safe and restful summer and time to connect with their loved ones.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to provide some clarity around a few of the measures included in Bill C-3, an act to amend the Citizenship Act for 2025.

Under the Citizenship Act, there are three ways to become a Canadian.

First, people can immigrate to Canada to get Canadian status. This is the story of my parents. I am the proud daughter of Vietnamese immigrants. My family came to Canada with hopes of safety and opportunity for their children. Like countless newcomers, they worked hard to build a future with the promise of true belonging. They earned their Canadian citizenship the way many families have, through resilience, hope and a deep commitment to this country.

Second, they can become a citizen by being born here. This is the story of my boys. Being Canadian, for me, meant that I did not have to pay a \$100,000 hospital bill to have my children. My boys have inherited something that so many around the world dream of: Canadian citizenship. It matters to me as a mom and as a member of Parliament representing over 41,000 immigrants in my riding of Spadina—Harbourfront. We must continue to protect Canadian values while ensuring that the pathway to getting citizenship is transparent.

Finally, someone can become a citizen by descent. This is where Bill C-3 steps in. It addresses the much-needed changes in Canada's approach to citizenship. In the previous act, Canadians who were born in Canada or who became citizens through immigration could pass citizenship on to children born abroad. However, those who inherited their citizenship by descent were not allowed to pass it on to their children born outside Canada. This rule, known as the first-generation limit, has created two tiers of Canadian citizenship.

Bill C-3 would make two major changes to restore fairness and reflect our charter values.

First, it would automatically restore or grant citizenship to individuals who lost it or were denied it due to outdated provisions, including the first-generation limit and the old rule that required people to apply to retain their citizenship by age 28. This includes lost Canadians, people who fell through the cracks of the law despite their deep connection to Canada through their parents and grandparents. They should never have been left out of our national fabric. They include the children of public servants posted abroad and people who lost their citizenship only because of technicalities. If enacted, this bill would extend automatic citizenship to anyone who was born outside the country to a Canadian parent before the legislation came into force and who is not currently able to claim citizenship by descent, because of the first-generation limit.

Second, Bill C-3 would introduce a new framework for citizenship by descent beyond the first generation. Our proposed legislation would extend citizenship by descent beyond the first generation in a way that would be inclusive and uphold Canadian values. Any child born abroad when or after Bill C-3 comes into force, to a Canadian citizen who was also born outside Canada, would be Canadian from birth if their parent can demonstrate that they have a substantial connection to Canada in the form of three years of physical presence in the country before the child's birth. This strikes a fair balance. It would protect the integrity of Canadian citizenship while recognizing that many Canadians live, work and raise families abroad but remain deeply connected to the country they call home.

What about now? What about families who cannot wait? If enacted, once in force, the bill would extend automatic citizenship to anyone who was born outside the country to a Canadian parent before the legislation came into force. This would include those who are currently not able to claim citizenship by descent, because of the first-generation limit. This would also include lost Canadians and their descendants. We know we cannot predict the number of children who would be born abroad when or after Bill C-3 is enacted. The current Citizenship Act will remain in force until this coming November. As Bill C-3 makes its way through the parliamentary process and the first-generation limit continues to be in force, IRCC has introduced an interim measure so that people impacted by the first-generation limit would have a pathway to citizenship. These are important steps while we work to enshrine these rights into law.

What happens if this bill is not enacted? After November 20, if Bill C-3 is not in force, there would be no limit to citizenship by descent for many people born to Canadians abroad. Without this bill, Canadian citizenship for many could be passed in perpetuity to future generations born outside Canada, regardless of their connection to our country. However, others would remain restricted by the first-generation limit. There are several groups who would not become citizens or have access to citizenship as a result of the court declaration taking effect before Bill C-3 comes into force.

I am proud to stand with a government that has put forward this bill and is finally getting this right, because being Canadian is more than a legal status; it is a promise. It is a promise of belonging, of dignity and of equal opportunity. It is a promise that has shaped my own life and the lives of millions. To be Canadian means having access to our democratic institutions, to vote, to run for office and

to contribute fully to public life. It means access to job opportunities, public services and, yes, a passport that opens doors around the world. More than that, citizenship is about identity; it is about saying that someone is one of us.

• (1525)

When we arbitrarily deny that promise to people with deep, verifiable connections to Canada, we are not upholding the value of citizenship. Instead, we are undermining it. We cannot leave behind those who love this country, who are tied to it by family, service and sacrifice. These are Canadians, and it is time we recognize them as such.

In a moment when our country is striving to build unity, Bill C-3 is a step in the right direction. It is a step towards closing historical gaps, recognizing families in their fullness and embracing all who carry Canada in their hearts, even if they were born outside our borders. This is how my parents built a life for my family. It is how I built a life for my children and how we can welcome home the lost Canadians.

I am proud to be the member of Parliament for a riding that is a mosaic. Immigrants are the backbone of this country, and Spadina—Harbourfront is a place where dreams take shape every day. We hear multiple languages on the sidewalk. We see small business owners opening shops before sunrise. We feel the vibrancy of different cultures, faiths and histories woven together, not in spite of our difference, but because of them.

Let us be a country that does not forget. Let us be a country that welcomes, recognizes and belongs to those who belong to it. Let us pass Bill C-3.

• (1530)

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a new member, so I welcome her to this place and thank her for her commitment to being a part of this important process.

This is a government bill that would allow many more people to become citizens of Canada. I assume that, in putting the bill forward, the government knows how many people it would affect and has an estimate of what additional costs it would impose on social services based on the right that these new citizens would have to access those services.

I wonder if the member could simply share with the House how many people this would affect and what the government's cost estimate for these new measures is.

Government Orders

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, in terms of how many people would be impacted by this legislation, the reality is that the majority of lost Canadian cases were remedied by the legislative amendments that were implemented in 2009 and 2015, with about 20,000 people either acquiring citizenship or having their citizenship restored through the amendment.

The government has not tracked births abroad since the Citizenship Act came into force in 1977, so it is impossible to estimate the number of persons born abroad to Canadian citizens. The department only becomes aware of these individuals if they choose to engage with a department for services, for example, seeking proof of citizenship or a passport. Moreover, not every person who has become a citizen automatically through previous legislative amendments will choose to engage the department on their status and request documentation of the status. Between 2019 and 2023, inclusively, IRCC received an average of 48,000 applications for proof of citizenship certificates annually.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet my colleague through the organization À voix égales, which promotes the place of women in politics. In fact, I am sorry to see that there are fewer women in the new Parliament. That is what I wanted to say. She may answer if she wishes.

I have a more specific question for her. During her remarks, my colleague talked about her family's arrival in Canada.

Does she think that women arriving here in 2025 have access to all the services they need to assist them when various studies have shown that women arriving here are often penalized, especially francophone women?

[English]

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I thank the colleague across the floor for her very thoughtful question, and I appreciate the time we worked together in the past promoting the space of women in politics and women in leadership.

In terms of the services in the country supporting women as they come through their immigration experience, the federal government does support a wide range of programs that support the integration of newcomers, and their experience, with programs such as the HIPPY program, which is a federally funded and supported program. It is an example of the kind of supports that exist in our system.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was fascinating to hear about the member's family. We heard a little bit of emotion when she talked about her parents and her children, and just how much people who have come to Canada can give. Unless one is indigenous, everyone immigrated here at some point, and it is important that we value what people come to give and contribute.

Within the riding of Waterloo, I have a constituent who was born abroad, but came to Canada right away. Her family is from Canada, and she contributes in Canada and pays taxes in Canada. She works for a Canadian company, but was travelling abroad when she delivered her baby earlier than expected. Because she was born abroad, and now her baby was born abroad, her baby was not eligible for citizenship.

I would like to hear the members' comments on that issue. Should the child of a Canadian be a Canadian?

● (1535)

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I believe they should. I know that, in the meantime, while Bill C-3 is hopefully moving through the system, we have introduced interim measures to support those affected. Individuals born abroad before December 19, 2023, can apply for a discretionary grant of citizenship under section 5(4) of the Citizenship Act. Those born after that date may also be eligible if their parents spent at least three years in Canada before their birth. We have also prioritized those virgin cases. This is how we are prioritizing and making sure that no one falls through the cracks at this time.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is almost certainly my last time speaking in the House before the summer recess, I want to join others in thanking the many hard-working staff around this place, including security, pages, table staff, local officers, committee clerks, etc. I thank them for facilitating the operations of Parliament.

This has been, I think, a short, but significant session. We are starting to get a sense of the character of the government and that it is a kind of chicken dance government. It is elbows up, elbows back down, elbows up, elbows back down, without a lot of consistency in its defence of Canada or in really anything else, but we are going to continue to prosecute the case against the government for the failures it has been responsible for over the last 10 years, and the continuing challenges this country faces as a result of its policies.

By the way, I will be splitting my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

I want to wish members well as they prepare for the summer. I have discovered, in the last 24 hours, just how seriously Liberal members take their desire for a summer vacation. Parliament did not sit at all this year until May 26. It is going on recess again at the end of this week.

At the HUMA committee, because we are facing a student unemployment crisis with more than one in five returning students unemployed this summer, Conservatives put forward a motion to have a summer study of student unemployment. We think parliamentarians should be prepared to get to work at committee so that students can get to work. I proposed five committee meetings, which is not a lot of work. It is 10 hours of hearings that could take place over the course of the summer. Liberals said initially they were interested in this. They put forward an amendment to change timelines. Then they voted against the study, killing it. Sadly, the HUMA committee will not be able to get to work this summer on the vital issue of student unemployment because Liberals care more about having the summer they want than giving students the summer they need finding summer jobs in order to get back to work. I hope the students who are struggling with unemployment will hold their Liberal MPs accountable for their decision to vote against a summer study on student unemployment, a study I think we desperately need when one in five returning students are out of work.

We are debating today Bill C-3. This is a bill that makes various changes to the citizenship rules in this country. I will go through the mechanics of it for those who are just joining the debate or those watching at home.

Right now, if a Canadian citizen has a child while abroad, that child is a Canadian citizen as well, but if that child born abroad has a child abroad there is a generation cut-off. Those are the present rules, that one cannot infinitely pass on Canadian citizenship through a family that is living outside of Canada.

I listened to the previous Liberal speaker describe this as arbitrary, that people are being arbitrarily excluded from Canadian citizenship. Actually, this is the opposite of arbitrary. Arbitrary would be if somebody was deciding whether or not they like us or whether or not a person would get citizenship based on the discretion of some bureaucrat or some indeterminate process. This is the opposite of arbitrary. It is a clear rule that is designed to limit Canadian citizenship to those who have ongoing clear connections to Canada.

The new bill would allow Canadian citizenship to be infinitely passed on through a family that, generation after generation, does not live in Canada. It requires, effectively, visits to Canada in order to be able to pass on that citizenship, but it does not require, at any point in that infinite generational passing on of citizenship, for that family to be residents in this country. The obvious problem with that is that citizenship is a compact between a nation of people and an individual. If one is a citizen, one assumes certain rights and responsibilities. I think we need to recognize and affirm the value of citizenship, including both its rights and responsibilities.

● (1540)

I am so grateful to live in a country where our citizenship is defined by shared civic values and a recognition of rights and responsibilities, not by some ethnocultural tie. My ancestors come from various places. Both of my wife's parents were born in Pakistan. I have heritage from all over the world in my family, as I think members all over the House do. We are a great nation because we are defined by shared civic values.

We are defined as one political nation, as one of our founders put it. The significance of that is that it involves rights and responsibilities.

Government Orders

ties. A person who is living abroad continues to enjoy all the rights of citizenship, likely desires well for Canada and thinks about ways they can contribute to Canada in the context of their situation. However, a family that lives abroad generation after generation is not paying taxes to Canada or able to be actively involved in Canadian civic life in the way that a person naturally is if they are here in Canada, yet they continue to have the rights of citizenship.

Under this new proposed citizenship law, we could have someone who has never been a resident of Canada, and their parents or grandparents had not been residents of Canada, yet they could come back to Canada for certain vital public services, which are rights that have become, at the point from which their family has not been in Canada, disconnected from the responsibilities that are also supposed to be associated with citizenship.

It is on that basis that Conservatives oppose this bill. We think it weakens Canadian citizenship and the recognition that Canada is an idea, a people and a place. We recognize that there has to be some constraints on citizenship to ensure a continuing connection with this place and an assumption of the rights and responsibilities associated with the common good of Canada.

The rules as they presently exist are not arbitrary. They are clear, fair and they affirm an understanding of citizenship that includes rights and responsibilities. Moreover, I think it is incredibly irresponsible that the government is putting forward legislation to expand and weaken Canadian citizenship without any sense of the potential cost implications. Canadian citizens have certain rights. People whose families have been outside the country for generations assuming the rights of citizenship entails responsibilities for the country. It also entails potential costs for the country, including assistance in emergency situations and a provision of social services, if that person returns to the country. All of these are realities that have to be assumed by Canadian taxpayers.

The government could make a case that it is legitimate and argue for it, but it should do so on the basis of clear numbers. The Liberals should be able to come before the House to say, "We are going to expand citizenship, and it is going to include a certain number of people and these are going to be the cost implications." However, it is clear from the response I received to my previous question for a government member that there is no desire or attempt to provide that costing.

We have a significant problem in this country with unemployment, pressure on our social services and demands on our country. We need to have a plan to address those demands. In the midst of all of these pressures, for the government to say that it is going to potentially dramatically increase the number of citizens but it does not know how many people that would affect and what the cost associated with that would be, is a major problem.

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Canadian citizenship is a great and valuable thing. It is something Canadians have regardless of where they came from or their family background. It entails rights and responsibilities and has to involve a connection and a commitment to this place we love.

• (1545)

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives proclaim that they stand for freedom, their careless and reckless approach restricted citizenship by descent to the first generation born abroad, stripping countless individuals of their rights and identities as Canadians. As well, under the former section 8 of the Citizenship Act, the Conservatives stripped away the citizenship of those born to the second generation abroad at the age of 28. Not only were these measures deemed unconstitutional by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, but they limited citizenship to those whom the Conservatives deemed worthy.

If the Conservatives truly claim to stand for freedom, will they take this opportunity to right their previous wrongs and vote in support of this legislation?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, respectfully, the member seems to have read a pre-prepared text that did not have much to do with the speech that I gave or the content that I talked about. I want to just say that I firmly reject the implication that freedom means having the most expansive possible citizenship rules. Freedom does not mean that we necessarily need to expand Canadian citizenship, as in this case, to families that have not lived in Canada for generations. I think a part of how we preserve, protect and strengthen freedom in this country is appreciating and affirming the value of Canadian citizenship and the connection to place that has to be associated with that citizenship.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. He is always so impassioned when he believes in what he is saying. I am surprised, because the law is important to him. It seems to me that the bill before us responds to a ruling by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

Is he prepared to convince his colleagues in the House of Commons not to respond to a ruling by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear.

Our caucus supports the version of the bill that was introduced by Senator Yonah Martin. It deals with measures to be taken in legitimate cases where citizenship should be restored.

That said, Bill C-3 goes further than what Canadians and the courts are calling for. I cannot support the measures in this bill that I spoke of earlier.

[English]

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is not in this bill is any sort of security check or background check on the people who might be conferred citizenship. As the member well knows, and as all of us do, security checks can be a really big, enormous, time-consuming part of getting citizenship.

My question to the member is this: What does he think about that? Does he think there should be security checks? How does that compare to the security checks that are already in place for existing people who want to get PRs and the time that it takes? Should there be a comparable process?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member underlines an important point about this legislation, which is the unknown. There would be so many people potentially affected by this change, and the government, as we have seen from responses to my questions, appears to have no estimate of the number of people affected, the cost or the associated issues with having families where, generation after generation, people are not in this country. They are not connected to this country and they are not part of the shared experience of this country, yet they maintain the rights of citizenship.

I think there are all sorts of attendant problems with that, and in opposing this bill, Conservatives are standing up for and defending the idea of a Canadian citizenship that is limited, that is based on clear rules and that is reflective of a connection to this place and an alignment with shared civic values.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about Bill C-3, and specifically about citizenship and immigration.

Citizenship and obtaining it can be a sensitive topic as it can inflame passions for various reasons. There are Canadian citizens who, like me, were born in Canada. There are people who immigrated here and wanted to settle in a country that offered them a way out of poverty or work opportunities. There are different reasons for wanting to live in Canada and become a Canadian.

Today, we are talking about Bill C-3. People listening to us need to understand that if, one day, a Canadian decides to move to another country, any country, settle down and have children there, those children will have Canadian citizenship. That system and that right exist. No matter whether they move for work or to settle down elsewhere, those children could be Canadians. However, Bill C-3 proposes that those children, who have never lived in Canada, who have always lived abroad, will be able, at the age of 20 or 30 years, to give their own child Canadian citizenship, when that child has no ties to our country. The father, the mother, the grandfather or grandmother decided to live abroad, so they have no ties here, but they, not to mention their own children, and so on, would automatically get Canadian citizenship. That is the direction we are heading in.

The Liberal government wants to pass this bill even though no one has any idea of the number of individuals living abroad who would automatically be entitled to Canadian citizenship. There would be some people among those entitled to a Canadian passport who would wonder where Canada is on a map. Does everyone understand how stupid that is? At some point, we need to take back control over immigration.

As we know, there are already huge problems in this country. The last 10 years have been a disaster in terms of the Liberal government's management of immigration. This is particularly true when it comes to asylum seekers because of Justin Trudeau's famous tweet in January 2017, which we all remember. He invited the world to come to Canada. We saw how that turned out. There are currently 600,000 people in Quebec, including 150,000 who have claimed asylum, whose cases have not even been processed or finished being processed. We therefore have a lot of problems to solve in managing immigration in order to restore an immigration system that is fair, honest and efficient for people who want to come to Canada.

Bill C-3 will give citizenship to people who have no ties to Canada. It makes no sense. It is very difficult to understand. We can imagine a situation where a child or grandchild of a Canadian who moved 50 years ago may have a criminal record in their country, but they would be entitled to a Canadian passport. There is currently nothing in the bill that would prevent criminals, or even terrorists, from being granted Canadian citizenship. That is unacceptable. That is why we strongly oppose it.

In terms of overall immigration to Canada, for years we have been calling on the House to exercise better border control; in fact, I was always the first to do so. I remember being insulted and called racist by former prime minister Trudeau and other ministers because I was raising an issue of public safety and population control. People were coming here because of the infamous tweet. For many years, people took advantage of the situation at Roxham Road. They were not coming here from a country that was being bombed; they were crossing over from the U.S. The government has created a situation where the Canadian immigration system has been unable to manage files properly. Other issues have been created. People have been here for several years because it takes two years to get a first meeting. If they are rejected, they can appeal, and they enter a never-ending system.

● (1555)

Some of these people have children who were born in Canada and who are therefore Canadians. In five, six or seven years' time, however, they might be told that their lives are no longer in danger, that they arrived from the United States, or that they have no ground to claim asylum in Canada and must therefore go back home. This creates other problems, such as having Canadian children, and so on.

We are calling for quick action to take back control of Canadian territory. As I said earlier, 600,000 people are currently living in Quebec on a temporary visa, work permit or study permit, along with asylum seekers. They are having a major impact on Quebec's health care system, education system and housing situation. In fact, the current housing shortage is partly due to groups of people who

are here for no acceptable reason. The government is not equipped to process files or ensure that people who set foot on our shores without a valid reason are sent back home. The system is either broken or too slow.

At the same time, there are other immigrants who are settled and working, but who are waiting for their permits to be renewed. They are under an incredible amount of stress. I know this is happening to many of my colleagues, but at my constituency office alone, there are 10 or 15 people coming in every day looking for information. They are waiting for their renewal, unable to speak to anyone. They are not getting notified that the waiting period has been extended. It lands on us, in our constituency offices, to do the work normally done by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada staff. This is not right. The machinery is completely broken.

It is not the civil servants' fault because everything was fine, basically. Prior to 2015, immigration to Canada was running smoothly. There were economic immigrants and refugees coming to the country. Immigration was being managed perfectly. Then the system completely derailed in recent years.

To remedy the situation, we must now also help the officials. They had to deal with a situation that was initially created by Roxham Road. Permits were then handed out by the federal government. Take Quebec, for example. The federal government ignored Quebec's priorities and decided to grant permits to people, supposedly to attend school. It turns out that these people are fake students. What they basically wanted was to come here and then claim asylum so that they could stay. That is compounding the problem.

What is needed are strict, concrete measures with a clear message from the government so that the officials who have to process these cases can do so quickly. When decisions are made, especially about people who have no business in this country, and when they are asked to leave, the decisions need to be carried out. Things cannot be left in limbo forever.

We are therefore urging the government to stop trying to give citizenship to people who have never lived in Canada or who have no connection to the country, and to start dealing with those who have already entered Canada. Those who deserve to be here should be treated well and should be taken care of properly. Those who had no business coming here should go back home. That is how it should work. Canada's immigration system needs to be fixed.

The last thing we need is to pass legislation such as Bill C-3.

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, I would like my colleague to tell me if he agrees that the situation I am about to describe should be resolved.

Here we have the case of the child from the Brooke-Bjorkquist family. The child was born in Geneva in 2010 to his parents who were working abroad for the Government of Canada. Despite the fact that the child was born to two Canadian parents and she returned to Canada when she was one, under the current provisions of the legislation, she could not follow the same path as her parents, in other words work abroad, give birth to her child and have that child be a Canadian citizen.

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Does my colleague not think it is important to correct that situation?

• (1600)

Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I hope I got the gist of my colleague's comment.

If Canadian parents who work in Geneva have a child and return to Canada, that child would be Canadian.

The question is, is that child—

Luc Thériault: The problem arises if her children are born abroad.

Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, if she resided in the country, then yes. There is the notion of stay in the country. The difference with Bill C-3 is the notion of having lived in the country. This is about a grandchild becoming Canadian even though their parent did not live in Canada.

I could discuss this with the member in private to clarify matters.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member was around at the time we made changes, so I am wondering if he could provide his thoughts on how important it is that when a superior court comes out with a ruling, there is a sense of urgency to legislation because of the ruling. Timelines have to be put in place.

What are his thoughts in regard to the whole amendment process for potential legislation? We have heard the Conservatives have concerns and may bring forward amendments. Does the member or the Conservative Party have amendments to date?

[*Translation*]

Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I would remind my colleague that one of the problems that caused deadlines to be pushed back and requests to pile up is that the Liberals wasted the House's time last fall by hiding all the information about the green fund. Furthermore, on January 6, former prime minister Trudeau decided to prorogue Parliament. Because the Liberals had so much trouble managing their own affairs, deadlines have now come and gone.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to what my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles said and I know that he has been very involved in the Roxham Road file, which has become very problematic for Quebec. He has talked about people who decided to cross the border while there were already hundreds of people waiting in line who had followed all the proper steps to settle in Canada.

After 10 years of laxness and chaos with regard to immigration, does my colleague think it's time to clean things up and take back control over this lost immigration which has practically turned the offices of members from all parties into branches of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada?

Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 years, as I said in my speech, there has indeed been a drastic change in how immi-

gration is managed in this country. One of the causes was Roxham Road.

As early as 2017, when I was the official opposition critic for public safety, we asked questions about this while calling on the government to close the border and close the loophole in the safe third country agreement. We were called racist for asking them to do that. Today, it is the various communities across the country that are calling for stricter access to immigration, because it creates problems. This has had a serious impact on communities in terms of health care, schools and housing. There are communities that keep demanding that we get things under control again.

I think the Liberals have started to get it. At the same time, when I look at Bill C-3, I am not sure they have fully understood.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to share some thoughts on the issue of citizenship.

The issue of citizenship and immigration has played a very important role in my political career. Since I was first elected in 1988, I became interested in the immigration file and in citizenship. They are tied together, the two of them. I have really grown to appreciate what makes Canada great. I believe it is our diversity.

If we take a look at the history of Canada, with the exception of the first nations, Inuit and Métis people, we will find that immigration has enabled Canada to be what it is today. It has been a very powerful source of growth, virtually from day one, and we have seen all forms and different waves of immigrants come to Canada in different ways. Some come for the idea of exploring. Some are individuals looking for economic opportunities to start a new life. There is a wide spectrum. Over the years, we have seen people come from every corner of the planet.

What I would like to emphasize is the degree to which people have a genuine and true appreciation of what it means to be a Canadian. I have, over the years, been to many different citizenship courts. I suspect any member of Parliament or legislature has had the opportunity to witness first-hand the importance of citizenship courts. I have participated in them in many different contexts, whether it has been in schools or health clinics. I particularly love the ones at Via Rail, the train depot, where Manitoba has received many immigrants over the years. There are public facilities like the Manitoba legislature and the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba's home, and there were many different locations within my own riding, both federally and provincially, when I was an MLA.

It did not matter where it was located. There was a very common thread that could be sewn through every one of those locations, and that was a sense of pride when a citizenship judge gets someone to say the oath, followed by the singing of the national anthem. We can sense that, even from individuals who are citizens. I, for one, will often repeat the oath, as encouraged by citizenship judges.

That can be an extremely touching moment, even for observers, let alone for an individual experiencing it first-hand and being sworn in as a Canadian citizen. That is why I attach so much value to our citizenship. I have seen first-hand hundreds of people being sworn in as Canadian citizens. I have seen the tears in their eyes, the emotions, the hugs and the general wonderful feelings in the recognition that they can now call Canada home as Canadian citizens. The singing of the national anthem, in particular, after being sworn in as Canadians gives a high sense of pride.

The issue of citizenship has been talked about at great length. When I was in opposition, I was fortunate enough to be the critic for immigration and citizenship. Whether it was in committees or in my capacity as a critic outside of Ottawa, I had the experience of being lobbied and had many discussions and debates about immigration and citizenship, what the criteria should be, how to ensure we are not just handing out citizenship and what form security checks should take. There were all sorts of discussions and debates on those issues.

● (1605)

I was not around when Stephen Harper made changes back in 2008. I was in the Manitoba legislature, but not here in Ottawa. Substantial changes were made back then. Those changes caused all sorts of issues that ultimately led to many Canadians being unable to receive their citizenship. We often hear about lost Canadians, and there have been attempts in the past to open up the issue and try to be more inclusive to recognize individuals for their citizenship.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions across the way in regard to the Superior Court of Ontario. Cases were being brought forward to the courts, and the Superior Court found that we needed to change the legislation, the law. The previous law that was put in place by Stephen Harper caused serious issues and denied citizenship for many Canadians. Through that process, we find ourselves here today. It was December 2023 when the Superior Court made the decision, and we have to have this matter resolved by November of this year. That is the extension that has been provided for the House of Commons to ensure that we get the legislation right.

I appreciate that when the minister was here earlier today, she talked about the details of the legislation. She afforded us the opportunity, as we all do, for questions and answers. In listening to the minister, I think one thing that stood out for me personally was her commitment to trying to get this legislation through the House by working with other members of Parliament.

As I said, we have had all sorts of discussions on this issue over the years. We have had standing committees look at it. This bill is very close, although not identical, to previous legislation that we attempted to bring through the House to try to deal with the issue at hand. It is something that does need to be dealt with. The minister made it very clear that if opposition members or government mem-

bers have ideas or thoughts that would improve the quality of the legislation, she is open to hearing those thoughts and ideas.

Here we are in the dying days of June in this session, and we will come back in September. I want members to realize that the court deadline is in November, and there will be other legislation before the House. The Prime Minister has made it very clear that we will be building Canada's economy and making our economy the strongest in the G7. Members can anticipate seeing other substantial pieces of legislation come forward.

We know that with the way the House of Commons works, there is a limited amount of time to have debate. Bill C-3 is an important piece of legislation for a lot of people. It has an impact on real lives. I would suggest thousands of lives. We do not know a hard number because we cannot know a hard number at this stage of the game. We might be able to guesstimate, but we cannot have a hard number because we do not know what that number is going to be.

● (1610)

I would encourage members opposite to look at the committee as an opportunity, if members in the chamber really want some specific amendments brought forward. That is why I asked the previous speaker if they had any ideas or amendment to advance. I am not trying to put members on the spot, but we have the legislative agenda of Parliament and a limited number of days for debate. We have to get through second reading, so when is the next time this bill will likely come up again for second reading debate? We are probably talking late September or maybe October. We need to remember that the deadline is November 2025.

If members are genuine in saying they have some changes they would like to see and they promote those changes, I suggest they share those ideas or thoughts with the department or the minister directly. At times, we can work together at building and strengthening legislation. I genuinely believe the Minister of Immigration is absolutely sincere when she says that she wants to have a healthier, stronger piece of legislation. If value can be added to it and we can build consensus, then let us talk about that.

● (1615)

I explained it in the fashion that I did because I want members to realize that the Superior Court of Ontario's extension says the deadline is November of this year. That means that if the bill goes to committee, there will be some potential limitations or that committee is going to be sitting extra amounts of time. If there is an opportunity for opposition members to put forward a couple of amendments or things they believe would build on the legislation, at least then we would have the summer months to look at them, review them and maybe have some consultations or something of that nature, as opposed to waiting until the end of September or the beginning of October, probably at the very earliest the beginning of October, when it would pass through the House and go to the committee stage. I say that for what it is worth.

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The substance of the legislation itself tries to deal with an injustice that is not only perceived but very real. In part, I am sensitive to the legislation because I served in the Canadian Forces. Even though I never served overseas, I had many friends who served overseas at the time. I like using the example of the Canadian Forces because I have first-hand experience. What happens is that individuals have families while abroad and have children. If they are Canadian citizens or naturalized, it does not really matter. When they are overseas, they have children, and those children are, no doubt, not going to have any issues in terms of being recognized as Canadian citizens. That is the way it should be.

I believe the world is a whole lot smaller today than it was 20, 30 or 40 years ago. More and more, there are Canadians throughout the world. I suspect we would find very few major cities in the G20 that would not have some sort of link to Canadians. That provides a great deal of value to all of us. When Canadians—

• (1620)

Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. I would like to know what time the Adjournment Proceedings will be occurring today.

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Bardish Chagger): That is not a point of order.

We will go back to the member.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, is that the best he could come up with? I must say I am a little disappointed in the member. We are talking about the importance of citizenship, and he wants to know what time the adjournment is. If he has other procedural questions of that nature, he might want to go to the table, where he will get answers directly, as opposed to being, I would suggest, somewhat rude and interrupting a train of thought that might be taking place.

As I was indicating, the world is a much smaller place. We should be very encouraged by the number of Canadians who live abroad, because we actually benefit from that. The Prime Minister has talked about how Canada is going to be able to grow our economy, respond to Donald Trump's trade tariffs and build Canada as the strongest nation in the G7. I would suggest this is one of the ways we could see it happen.

I will give a tangible example of that. I was in the Philippines back in December, and I had the opportunity to meet with a number of people who have direct links to Canada through citizenship and who do business in the Philippines. At the beginning of my comments, I talked about the diversity of Canada. When we think of the diversity of Canada, it is not just the whole multicultural aspect of our society and how we reflect the globe, but there are different ways we can take advantage of that diversity. One of those ways is through trade.

When someone starts to put limitations in place to the degree the Harper administration did, we put more limits on Canada's potential, our diversity and our ability to be a very strong and healthy country going forward, or even throughout our history.

Many members of Parliament have the opportunity to travel to different countries. Often, when in another country, we meet individuals at stores, trade shows or at conferences who talk about their

roots back to Canada. It does not matter whether it is India, the Philippines or many of the other countries throughout the world, why would we not want to be more inclusive?

More importantly, for the sake of argument on this particular piece of legislation, why would we not be listening to the Superior Court of Ontario, which has made it very clear there are issues with the passing down of citizenship? The legislation talks about a sustainable connection. The number of 1,095 is not a number that is just pulled out of the blue sky. It is a very real number being used for permanent residents today. If someone is in Canada for 1,095 days in a five-year period of time, they are eligible to become a Canadian citizen.

At the end of the day, I believe we should at the very least get behind this legislation and see it go to the committee stage because of the November 2025 deadline. Failing that happening, I would really encourage members opposite to come forward and share what amendments or ideas they have. I suspect there might be some good ones there, and we can look at ways we might be able to incorporate them. We do not need to wait until the committee is actually meeting in order to share thoughts and ideas, especially when we have a minister who is so committed to working with members of the House in order for Bill C-3 to pass, ultimately before the deadline, for the benefit of all Canadians and those who—

• (1625)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently for the last few minutes, and the member opposite asked for any suggestions or amendments. One of the things I would like to put forward is that in this legislation, Bill C-3, there is no talk of any background or security checks for any of these people who could be getting clearance and citizenship to come to Canada. I wonder if the Liberals feel that maybe it is a good idea to include that in this bill, going forward.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the thing I would say to my friend across the way is that if we do nothing, if the legislation does not pass, then we would have the Ontario Superior Court ruling take effect, and we would have individuals then putting in their applications and getting their citizenship without any background checks. As such, there is the idea of getting the legislation into committee and looking at possible amendments. As I say, some might get through, depending on whether they are amendments that would actually give strength to the legislation.

I am going to bring it back to the time issue. The time issue, I think, is of critical importance.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand what injustice this bill is remedying. Let me give another example. I will speak slowly so my colleague can give me the right answer.

I would like to talk about the case of Jean-François. His father was born abroad. Jean-François was born abroad when his father was doing his Ph.D. in the United States. Despite the fact that he came to Quebec at the age of three months, grew up and lived his entire life in Quebec, his daughter was unable to get automatic citizenship.

Does Bill C-3 correct that injustice? If so, under what conditions? If not, why?

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, let me give a specific example. With respect to his example, what he might want to do is to share it with the department, and I am sure he will get an answer that would hopefully satisfy him in terms of details on that specific file.

However, specifically, when we take a look at loss of citizenship related to section 8, Patrick was born in 1978 in Kenya. His father was a Canadian citizen who was also born abroad. Patrick was born a Canadian citizen, but did not apply to retain his citizenship before he turned 28, as required by the section 8 retention requirements in place in the legislation at the time, and lost his citizenship in 2006 when he turned 28. Upon the new legislation's coming into force, Patrick's citizenship would be restored, retroactively, to the date of the loss.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was going to say it is always a pleasure, but I am not sure it is, to listen to the member from Winnipeg—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Brad Redekopp: Okay, it is a pleasure.

Mr. Speaker, there are things that we have been trying to get at today that we have not gotten an answer for. I know that the member is very knowledgeable, so I am hoping that he will have an answer for it. It is the number of people who would be impacted by this legislation. It is important because we have heard numbers in the hundreds of thousands, and the government seems to be unable to provide a real number. It is important because the legislation would potentially cause a lot of extra bureaucratic work in different departments, and certainly it would cost Canada money. I am curious if the member has a number of how many people this legislation would impact. If he does not, why?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a number, and I do not necessarily know, even within the bureaucracy, if there would be a hard and fast number. I suspect that there might be some fairly accurate guesstimates, but I think that we might be able to flesh out some of that information once we are at the committee stage.

I suspect we would be talking about several thousands of individuals. A lot depends on the number of people who would want to put in their applications. We could have x number out there who are potential, but it does not necessarily mean that all of them would actually put in the application, so the only way that we could determine a hard number is to go ahead and anticipate. We will get answers through the passing of the legislation, and there might be some ballpark numbers to provide some level of comfort for members.

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• (1630)

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I that the Liberals were very bad when it came to immigration. The massive arrivals of temporary migrants in Quebec put considerable pressure on public services. There was the non-repayment of fees relating to those temporary migrants and the Roxham Road psychodrama.

However, we are now considering a measure for which there is consensus. We discussed the bill during the previous Parliament and everyone seemed prepared to get on with it. I would like to reach out to my colleague from Winnipeg North. I would like him to tell me why the Conservatives seem to have such major reservations about a bill for which there is, after all, broad consensus.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am an optimistic guy at times when it comes to the Conservative Party. I believe that the Conservatives will have the summer to reflect on the issues that are within Bill C-3, and I hope we will see where there might be merit to making some changes so that the whole House will get behind the citizenship bill. I hope we all recognize the deadline that is before us so that, come November, we can actually respect the ruling of the court.

One of the things that Canadians responded exceptionally well to with regard to the immigration aspect of the question is that we have a Prime Minister who really has amplified the issue of immigration levels that are sustainable. I really believe that Canadians have responded well to that, and we are focused on ensuring that the sustainable numbers do protect the interests of all Canadians.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague for sharing with us about his time in uniform. I am really grateful to our men and women in uniform for the rights and freedoms that we have and, as has been mentioned numerous times today, with rights and freedoms come responsibilities.

I recognize that citizenship is definitely a privilege. It is an honour. My family immigrated to Canada, and I was born and raised here, but what I find interesting is that many individuals who are my age also immigrated to Canada when they were very young; they have been in Canada their whole life and they work for Canadian businesses. When they go abroad and perhaps expand their family, those children do not have the right to citizenship.

Today, there is a lot of conversation in regard to security. If a second-generation, not-born-Canadian person is abroad and gives birth to a baby, that baby would not have any reason to have securities done. The opposition is talking about securities.

Could the member just elaborate on the importance of recognizing that a child of a Canadian citizen is a citizen?

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Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, within the legislation, dealing with that second-generation child being born, to automatically rule out that child for whatever reasons ultimately does a disservice. That is the reason I tried to share my thoughts in regard to the economy and trade and how the world is a much smaller place. Having Canadian ambassadors by the thousands out and about is good for Canada in many, many different ways. I would ultimately agree it helps our lifestyle here in Canada.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Winnipeg North on his maiden speech of this afternoon.

It is remarkable to sit here and listen to the member drone on and on, blaming Harper. It is almost as if the member had not been sitting in that exact same spot for the last 10 years as part of the government that sat and did nothing about this problem.

On a different issue, the immigration department released its report this week on misconduct and wrongdoing in the department, including rampant bribery issues, problems with misconduct, ethical lapses and privacy breaches. I wonder if the member opposite could tell us what the government is going to do about these problems within the immigration department, instead of blaming Harper.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the Conservatives are a little sore on is the issue that there is more turnover in the Liberal benches than there is in the Conservative benches. We are talking about a new Prime Minister and a new administration. The Prime Minister has been a member of Parliament for two months; Pierre Poilievre was a career politician. In terms of change, and this is the reason it is important to recognize it, we have a new Prime Minister with a new administration that is going to tackle the problems that my friend just raised in the form of his question—

• (1635)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order. The time has expired for questions and comments.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for York—Durham, Housing; the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, Housing.

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this being my first opportunity to be on my feet for an extended time, I just want to take the opportunity to thank the great people of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry for giving me the honour of coming back to the House of Commons for a third time. I am extremely proud to serve as their federal member of Parliament. I want to welcome the residents of North Glengarry, who are new to the riding. It is going to be a little bit easier for the Speaker now to say Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, without the “south” in there. We have reunited all of S, D and G, the city of Cornwall and Akwesasne.

I want to take the time while I have the floor to thank all of those who helped out in our recent campaign, from our campaign team, volunteers and door knockers to the thousands of people who took signs and, at the end of the day, those who marked and cast their

ballot for me. It is something that I never take for granted and I am deeply grateful for.

I am grateful for my family and my close network of friends. I have a great big group of second mothers, as I call it, not only volunteers but family and a wonderful group of friends that support us in this unique work that we do and lifestyle that we have of, as I always say around home, getting our meals and miles in. I want to thank my family: my dad, Ed; my mum, Bea; my sister Jill; and my step-parents and step-siblings. I would be a little while listing the five stepsisters that I have, but I wanted to say how grateful I am for their love, encouragement and support.

I am pleased to rise today to add my contributions to the government's legislation, Bill C-3, an act to amend the Citizenship Act of 2025. This is not the first time we have seen a bill in this form. We have actually seen this as a Senate private member's bill in a much different form, one that I think would be much more beneficial. I will get into that in my comments here over the course of the next several minutes.

I want to start by talking about the value and the importance of citizenship in this country. One of my favourite things is when we get the list, on a monthly basis, from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, of individuals in our ridings who have recently obtained Canadian citizenship. It provides us an opportunity to send them a scroll of congratulations. One of the things my staff and I are proud of is not only signing each scroll and certificate but putting a passport application in there and letting them know that they can come to our office for service, making that connection.

One of the things we want to do is to show how proud we are of the value of Canadian citizenship. It is a privilege and an honour. We have people come back in, people I have met from all over the riding, in the community, both in Cornwall and S, D and G. They will come in and appreciate that scroll and show just how proud they are to be Canadian. It is an immense privilege to have the chance to do that.

Bill C-3 will do that in a few different ways. We agree with some measures and sections. There are others that we have some concerns about, and I will get into that. The bill is a recycled version of Bill C-71 from the last Parliament that was tabled by the Trudeau Liberals. Bill C-71 came out of a Conservative private member's bill from a wonderful senator of ours, Senator Yonah Martin, that was heavily amended, Bill S-245.

I want to say that the reason we are here is that in 2023, the Ontario Superior Court ruled that the first-generation limit was unconstitutional. The government chose, in this case, not to appeal it. It had the opportunity to appeal and test that in court, but it chose not to. Instead the government committed to changing the law. The court did say, and it is important in our discussions, and I am going to be talking about this, that the “substantial connection test” would be appropriate to ensure that these new citizens were actually connected to Canada. That is a major concern that we have.

Right now, the plan is a very poor test, frankly. The fact is that there is 1,095 nonconsecutive days, with no way to know how that is all done. Again, we talk about having a connection to Canada, that privilege of citizenship, that connection to Canada for an individual to have. It is certainly strained in the way the government has this written.

I want to start with some of the areas that Conservatives have found agreement on that need to be addressed. First is the provisions for adopted children. For myself, when reading about the legislation and our briefing notes and hearing other colleagues today speak about this from our side of the aisle, when it comes to the adoption of children and making it easier for Canadian parents and facilitating citizenship when they adopt children abroad, this issue is something that is worthy of merit and consideration in this legislation.

• (1640)

We need to make it easier in this country for parents to adopt, whether that is domestically or around the world. In this measure right now, the current process is a PR process, a permanent resident process, that parents have to go through and so forth. The bill would treat adopted children the same as natural born. I think that is a step in the right direction. When we talk about cutting red tape, this is one way we can do that, by making it easier for families to adopt. There are still a lot of processes to go through and a very stringent requirement for parents to do so, but when they adopt a child from another country and that adoption process is final, that is when they are treated the same as natural born and get that. It is an easier process as opposed to going through PR and that process, which can sometimes be complicated and difficult for families to navigate as they have gone through many other forms and processes already to go through the child custody and adoption process.

Conservatives have been on record on this before. My colleague from Saskatoon West has done a great job on this piece of legislation and on many of these topics already.

There are several quotes that came from the immigration committee, where we have been on the record on that. We stated, quote, we want to see adopted children have their citizenship respected in the same way. That means allowing them to pass it on without going through unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles. We have been on the record before in this House and at committee. We will continue to do that here in the House as we go through this part of the bill.

Another part of the bill we can support, for which I am going to give two positives, if I could, is restoring citizenship for lost Canadians. We deem that to be reasonable. I want to give, as I did earlier, kudos to our Conservative senator. There is a smaller number these days, but we have a wonderful Senate caucus over on the

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Conservative benches there. Senator Yonah Martin's bill, Bill S-245, was designed with a clear and narrow goal: to restore Canadian citizenship to a small cohort of lost Canadians. I would say her effort was non-partisan and targeted to remedy a situation that came up nearly 50 years ago in our country.

Conservatives supported that bill at every stage to ensure the Canadians who were unfairly left out of previous citizenship reforms, including those stripped of their citizenship at age 28 under section 8 of the act, could have justice and a fair process. However, the process went through the Senate, and it was a good part of the way through the House and committee. The NDP and the Liberals then hijacked it and made several significant changes, which is where we are at today, many of which are in the form of Bill C-3.

Conservatives have said that while we support the measures I just spoke about, we cannot support the bill in the current form, because there are several other issues of challenge. It dilutes the integrity of Canadian citizenship by automatically extending it to multiple generations. Several of my colleagues have mentioned this in their comments today and have asked Liberal members to provide a number. We are unable to substantiate the number of applicants and the impact this is going to have on immigration, IRCC and the department in this country. How many more will obtain Canadian citizenship through this? It will be countless as it goes on through generation after generation. There is no number to know that. We do not know the cost on services of obtaining passports. There could be old age security and guaranteed income supplement applications and eligibility that come from it. Some of it could be retro, depending on how all this goes, so it could be very difficult in that way. Therefore, I think that is a major issue we have that we need to discuss and to have further clarification on.

One of the challenges is not only the countless generations but also the minimal substantial connection test. I mentioned the 1,000 days the government has put in the legislation. One of the key challenges is that it is nonconsecutive. It goes back, at the end of the day, to the court ruling the government referenced, which said there is space and an opportunity for the legislation to come forward to have that substantial connection test. The government has chosen for it to be 1,000 nonconsecutive days.

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• (1645)

Conservatives are on record as saying that it needs to be consecutive days. There needs to be a substantial test. That would be a fair way to make sure that the value of Canadian citizenship is maintained by a person's having a real, legitimate, tangible, long-term connection, at even 1,000 days, but a substantial connection at that point, to Canada in obtaining their Canadian citizenship.

There is another key aspect that Conservatives have raised about the current form of Bill C-3 and about Bill C-71. We also raised it during debate on Bill S-245, when it was gutted by the NDP and Liberals, and vastly expanded to what we see now. There is no requirement for a criminal record check to take place.

We talk about public safety in our country and the need to make sure we have a stringent immigration process, a fair, secure and safe immigration process. The fact that there would not be an obligation, it would not be mandatory, to have a criminal background check is completely inappropriate. Earlier, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader made his comments and interventions about that. He kept saying that the Liberals are open to suggestions and to amendments. Conservatives have been on the record about some of the things we would do and what we want to do. The government has had multiple opportunities to correct the issue by putting it proactively in the bill and making a background criminal check a requirement.

That was debated in the last Parliament in Bill S-245. Conservatives did raise the issue, and we debated it substantially, while the Liberals veered in and around it. Bill C-71 was introduced under the Trudeau government as a piece of legislation, and now the same Liberal government has come back with Bill C-3, yet it has still not put it in. I can assure the House that my Conservative colleagues at the citizenship and immigration committee, if the bill does proceed to committee, will be advocating it. I am very confident that would be an amendment that would come forward.

My comment on this for Canadians is to make an observation about the lack of seriousness the Liberals have shown when it comes to public safety to ensure that Canadians who would be granted citizenship through this process are able to pass a criminal background check. The Liberals have had the opportunity to put this in. The fact that we have had to fight and fight for this, while the Liberals have continually obstructed it, says a lot about their lack of seriousness about it. We will continue to push the topic and continue to do all of this at committee, in debates here in the House, and so forth.

Another major aspect and concern, as I mentioned, is the cost of the bill, as well as the number of people who would be eligible and the countless generations. There are some unintended consequences that would happen if the flaws and issues that we see in the legislation are not addressed. A key part about this is that the numbers are very important when it comes to immigration. We have seen the Liberal government fail time and time again when it comes to the numbers in our immigration system.

We could survey Canadians, and I am sure they would say a few things. I am sure they would say that they believe that in order to obtain Canadian citizenship through this process, it would not be unreasonable in Bill C-3 to add in a provision that would require a

security background check. Most Canadians would say that would be common sense.

Most Canadians would think that if the government is going to introduce legislation that would have a major impact on the number of people eligible for citizenship, passports, services and all of that support, the government would have estimates on how many people would be impacted and what the cost would be to various departments and services. People would think the government would have all of that. It has refused to provide those numbers. Most Canadians would say that they would expect parliamentarians and the government to have that information on hand, available for public knowledge and discussion, when a piece of legislation like this is coming forth.

However, when it comes to numbers, we have seen so many times how the Liberal government has broken our immigration system with reckless numbers. We have seen them, and we know that the Liberals know they have created a failed and broken system after 10 years of being in office, because they are trying to rescind many of the decisions they made. They are now trying to make major changes to the temporary foreign worker program.

• (1650)

They provided over a million international students with permits, with zero plans for them to be housed safely in appropriate circumstances and with affordability. I have spoken to a large number of international students at St. Lawrence College in Cornwall and in my travels in Eastern Ontario and across the country. It has been incredible the number of frustrated international students who heard for years about the opportunity to study in Canada.

Under the Trudeau government and continuing under the current government, the Liberals keep missing their targets. Even after they have realized the issues they have made and tried to cap numbers, they broke the international student system. We heard stories in the GTA of six, eight or nine people staying in a two- or three-bedroom home and sometimes paying \$1,000 or more each in rent. These are ridiculous prices. We have heard of international students having to go to food banks.

The reason I raise all of this is that the government and the Liberals, when it comes to our immigration system, in numbers and in a sustainable system, have failed Canadians, new Canadians and those immigrating to Canada, very, very deeply.

We have seen it with respect to permanent residency. Members do not have to take my word for it; the government has admitted it broke the immigration system when it comes to permanent residency, because now it has rescinded and it is attempting to cap the number of permanent residents admitted into Canada and approved every year.

The Liberals have made many changes. They have actually closed the group sponsorship for refugees, which I have been personally supportive of. They have shut that program down. I have done that as a Group of Five; we sponsored a Syrian refugee family. I gave up my house and went to live in my mom's basement for six months, believe it or not.

I was part of a Groups of Five sponsorship opportunity, where we came together as a community to help a family in need abroad. They are doing very well in Canada these days. Because the government has broken the immigration system, and asylum claimants and the whole refugee system are severely under strain, it had to cancel that program in order to try to get its numbers under control.

Now we find the government proposing legislation in Bill C-3, about which we are asking what the number would be, how many this would impact, and what the impact would be on government departments and the economy in our country. We do not know.

I can just see another issue coming of the government's being woefully unprepared for the very legislation it introduces. It just speaks again of virtue signalling on its part, of breaking our immigration system and not learning from those lessons. We continue to see it time and time again.

I will give the Liberals a little bit of a compliment, but I do not want them to take it the right way. They get an A for an announcement. I have never seen people do photo ops and announcements better than the Liberals. That is their compliment. They can get the banners. They get the best backdrops. They have the podium announcement. They have people cheering. They have the news release out. It looks great, and it sounds great, full of Liberal word salad.

However, what happens is that they get an A for an announcement and an F for follow-through. Look at their tax cut today. They talk about numbers. Their big tax cut never came to fruition. It is drastically, astronomically smaller than what they said it was going to be.

The Liberals are not good with numbers. They are not good with numbers on the budget. They will not table a budget this spring. They will not tell us what the deficit is. They broke our immigration system by having numbers get out of control. We have another piece of legislation dealing with citizenship and immigration, for which they do not know the cost, they do not know their numbers and they are not doing the math. Canadians have seen this after 10 years, on repeat, over and over and time and time again.

Conservatives have said that there are measures of the bill that we will support and that we have been on the record as supporting before. However, we have some serious concerns about several of the provisions that need to be addressed.

We cannot support citizenship by descent for countless generations, we need to change the test for a substantial connections test, and we need to make sure every applicant passes a criminal background check. These are common-sense things my Conservative colleagues and I will continue to advocate for, to make sure, at the end of the day, that anybody who comes to Canada and becomes a citizen has an amazing opportunity to afford a home, to get a good job, to get health care and to enjoy what so many of us have had: a great quality of life in this country.

• (1655)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really wish you would give me enough time to really go

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into depth in regard to the comments that were made by the member opposite.

He talks about the numbers, and there is a rationale. I could be just as, if not even more, critical of when Pierre Poilievre sat around the cabinet table and of some of the immigration decisions they made. In essence, in 2025, there would be a reduction from 500,000 to 395,000; in 2026, to 380,000; and in 2027, to 365,000. Pierre Poilievre was asked to comment, and all he said was that the Conservatives would have more “severe limits”, but then he walked away from the mic. He did not want to actually answer any questions in regard to what “severe limits” means. There are all sorts of issues in immigration.

Would the member opposite not agree, given the nature of the beginning of his speech, that there would be an advantage to having the bill go to a committee well before November?

Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have finally agreed with many others whom they attacked and degraded for so many years, and are saying that the immigration levels and targets they set were way too high. People came into Canada, and many became Canadians, but we did not have sustainable measures.

We made a promise, Liberal and Conservative governments for generations, decades, that if a person immigrated to Canada, they could afford to live, they could get a good job, and they could have a good quality of life, but we have seen that eroded over the course of the last 10 years. Therefore, with respect to any numbers that the Liberals cite, attacking anybody else, it is their own record for the last 10 years. They selected those numbers, which were clearly too high, because the Liberals have actually cut back and restricted them on their own, and they broke our immigration system. Their own actions, over the course of the last year, are a full admission that they failed when it came to numbers and the math on immigration.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I note that the Conservatives are using this debate on Bill C-3 to criticize the problems at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Wait times are very long. I see these problems in my constituency office as well. These are some of the most serious cases. In fact, cases are getting worse. It is a very outdated department. We agree on that, and we share the Conservatives' criticism of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

However, that is not what Bill C-3 is about. Bill C-3 actually seeks to respond to an Ontario Superior Court ruling and correct historical injustices against individuals.

Is my colleague casting doubt on the justice system?

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[English]

Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it is the absolute opposite. I would reference the court ruling and the legislation we introduced here, and passed, to meet what was required, which does provide the opportunity for a substantial connection test. What we are saying is that 1,000 non-consecutive days is not acceptable. However, the government has the right to put that section in the legislation.

There are parts of the legislation we do support, and there are some we do not. The court ruling itself says that a substantial connection test is reasonable to do. We are saying that what the government is proposing is not reasonable. That is part of the debate, and the Bloc Québécois should be part of it. There are reasons to criticize, and I think that is one of the things we are going to be discussing in committee.

Gaétan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate all day, and for Canadians who are listening, part of this must be very confusing.

I would like to have something clarified. If a Canadian woman has a child in a country outside Canada, with a man from that country, the child is raised in the other country, and then the Canadian woman comes back to Canada, but 30 years from now the child decides to come to Canada, would that child be a Canadian, under Bill C-3?

• (1700)

Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, under the current law, I believe that, yes, that is the way it would be.

However, the challenge in the legislation is that multiple generations, the children of children who live in another country, may not have that same connection, which comes back to the substantial connection test. This could go on for multiple generations. Eventually, there would be people applying for citizenship, through the legislation being proposed by the Liberals, who would not have a substantial connection to Canada.

With respect to the 1,095 non-consecutive days, this is the question people have to ask themselves: Is that really a substantial connection test for obtaining Canadian citizenship and for having the honour and pride of doing that?

I am very proud of our Canadian citizenship and of those people who are able to join, but the big question on that is the multiple generation aspect that is going to cause a lot—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I recognize my colleague's thoroughness and professionalism, but I am wondering about something after listening to his speech.

If he is interested in the issue and in debating it, why does he not agree that the bill should be studied in committee?

Then he would have a chance to debate it and hear from experts.

Why does he want to defeat Bill C-3 at this stage?

[English]

Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it is trust. This is not the first version of the bill that we have seen. We had Bill C-71 in the last Parliament. We also had Bill S-245, a Conservative Senate private member's bill go through, which was gutted and hijacked by the Liberals and the NDP.

I will use the example of the criminal background check's being a requirement. We have advocated for that multiple times, but we have been told, "Oh, take it to committee, and we'll talk about it." Well, we are talking about it now, because this is about the third time we have had to raise it, unsuccessfully, to get the Liberals and NDP to agree to do all that. Therefore the issue is trust.

We could move it along to committee, but we want to take the opportunity now to raise awareness for Canadians. If the member surveyed 100 residents in her community, I am sure that a vast, overwhelming majority would say that a criminal background check is a very reasonable, common-sense approach. The government could have put that in there, and it comes down to trust. It did not do that, again, and I am not very confident that if the bill gets to committee, the Liberals are going to finally see the light on that.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his well-thought-out speech, my colleague talked about trust and how the government cannot seem to tell Canadians how many people would be affected and what the cost would be. This is from Immigration Canada's own website: Support for immigration among Canadians has decreased substantially. These are the government's own words. The number of Canadians who say we're bringing in too many newcomers is up 50% in two years. The government says it is the most concern about the rate of immigration that it has seen in 20 years.

Does the member think the government making these changes in Bill C-3 without knowing how many people would be affected will add trust and confidence to the system?

Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, not knowing their numbers, not knowing their facts, not having a plan is the definition of insanity after 10 years of the Liberal government. This is what the Liberals do. They do not plan properly, do the accounting or do the math. We just get continued chaos and disorder, as we see in our current immigration system.

I will tell members that the number one group of Canadians that I hear from as being most frustrated about our immigration system are new Canadians who just went through the system. I hear time and time again about it, whether it is labour and getting their foreign credentials recognized, the cost of living, the bureaucratic process that many members have raised here today or the archaic system that is IRCC, Immigration Canada.

After 10 years, we have lost a consensus on immigration. Sadly, the consensus is going against the Liberal record of what has happened the last number of years. We need to bring back some restrictions, as the member said. We need to have caps that are enforced and, most importantly, a compassionate system that guarantees that when a new Canadian arrives here, they have a great opportunity at a good house, job and quality of life.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is worth noting that our new Prime Minister has made it very clear in every mandate letter that talks about sustainable immigration levels. The new Prime Minister understands what Canadians are talking about with the administration, and it is a part of this new administration's priorities. It is in the mandate letter. Does the member not see that as a positive thing?

• (1705)

Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the member has been here for several years. I have to chuckle because he is saying the Prime Minister said we need sustainable immigration levels. That is acknowledging the Liberals have not had sustainable immigration levels for many years. That is the record they are going on. This is not a new government; it is a continuation of the same government. We have seen the Liberals break caps they promised to pile on. We are seeing a system just as backlogged. We are seeing just as much frustration in an archaic system when it comes to immigration. It is broken, and they cannot be trusted to fix the system that they themselves broke.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague who just gave a barnburner of a speech and a clinic to everybody in this House about what is wrong with this legislation. I will try to follow that.

Before I do that, I want to thank everybody who is participating in this Parliament today, but I also want to thank everybody who got us here, specifically the volunteers in Calgary Centre who did a really good job in making sure we have good representation continuing in Calgary Centre. I will do my utmost for my constituents, to make sure their opinions and input are represented well in this House of Commons. I thank the volunteers, of course, and my family and my wife. I thank them all for everything they did to make sure we brought good government back to this side of the House to make sure we hold the government to account, because frankly, I think it is the same old government even though its members protest that it is new. It does not seem like any of its actions are new.

That leads us to today's legislation. Bill C-3 is a carbon copy of Bill C-71 from the last Parliament, and it got stuck every step of the way because of exactly what we are talking about today. There are big holes in this legislation, and the government knows that. The government has put another bill on the table that we get to spend time talking about in this House of Commons when we really should be dealing with things that are much further up the rank in importance. Frankly, we should be talking about the economy, the nation's debt or what we have to do to get projects built in this country again. However, the government is obsessed with repeating the same mistakes it made before.

I am a little surprised that this topic comes up so high on the Liberals' agenda. I was on the immigration committee last session, and

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this one is back here again. We always thought the Liberals were just trying to co-opt the party that used to be known as the New Democratic Party by making sure they were spinning their wheels and continuing to gain their support. Evidently not, though, because I am not sure the Liberals need the seven votes that are independent over here now because the NDP failed to maintain party status as a result of being the Liberal Party's lapdog for the last three and a half years. It is embarrassing, quite frankly, but this is a game, and this game cannot continue.

If we want good legislation, we have to put good legislation forward. It is our job, as His Majesty's loyal opposition, to make sure we bring forth the problems we see in this bill, and there are numerous problems. We have pointed them out for the last couple of years and said what the Liberals have to change.

I have listened to speeches here from the members across the way today, and it is almost like they are living in an illusion. There are talking points. They are making things up. They are given Liberal talking points and told to just go out there and say them. It does not have to be the truth. It does not have to be based on reality. It just has to be the Liberal talking points. It is all presentation and absolutely zero substance about how this is going to affect the country. I will go through this in a number of ways.

We have the government and the deputy government House leader on the other side. He may be the chief government whip or deputy government whip. I am not sure what position he has been shuffled to at this point; I apologize. Effectively, what we are talking about here is a new government that is just a change of socks from the old government at this point. This is disastrous, but it goes back a long way.

One thing we have always been clear about on this side of the House is that there was a gap in the actual admissibility of Canadians that the previous law had. That was being dealt with. I will get to that later in my speech, about how we were dealing with that, and how the government and the department of immigration were dealing with that without this broad legislation coming in to suddenly change and upend the world.

Conservatives support fixing the issue of lost Canadians. I cannot say how many times I have heard over on the other side that Conservatives are opposed to this. That is a talking point. Conservatives absolutely support the issue of lost Canadians and making sure they become Canadian citizens. We think there are around 20,000 eligible Canadians who are not eligible right now because they have fallen through the cracks of what the previous legislation said were Canadians.

Senator Yonah Martin put forward a bill to address exactly that. It was Bill S-245; that is the numbering they have over in the Senate. It took a targeted approach to make sure those wrongs were righted and that these people did have a pathway to Canadian citizenship, and it was very clear.

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• (1710)

Bill C-3 goes way beyond fixing the holes. It goes way beyond any sanity as far as how a developed nation's immigration system is supposed to go through a process when we are bringing people into this country. It is a sweeping overhaul. It opens the door to abuse and weakens the very meaning of what it means to be a new Canadian.

First, this bill would eliminate the first-generation limit on citizenship for children born abroad. Under this bill, anyone born outside Canada to a Canadian parent, regardless of how many generations removed they are, could claim citizenship if that parent spent 1,095 non-consecutive days in Canada. What does that mean? If we count the years, that is three years of, effectively, maybe visiting family three months at a time or whatever the case may be, and suddenly they are Canadian. That is less than three years, with no requirement for consecutive presence and no criminal background check. Effectively, people would be getting around what is a very important and very highly considered international requirement for becoming a citizen in almost any country. Can we get an international background check on this? Can we have some police check? No, this person would automatically be a Canadian citizen.

I do not know why that is a point of contention. Perhaps it is because breaking the system and then bringing it back in front of this House in two years' time, if the Liberals manage to push this bill through with some support, would be something that occupies the House's time. There would be some more and some more, as opposed to dealing with the issues one time, fixing everything right and getting it done.

This bill does not provide a substantial connection to being Canadian. It is a loophole. It would allow for multi-generational flow-through citizenship to people who may never have lived in Canada, paid taxes here or contributed to our society in any meaningful way. It is an open door, telling people they get to come to Canada because they have a long-term, long-ago connection, that they have, effectively, been able to passport shop and come here.

I am going to go into the last prime minister's statement about how we got here and what we are doing here. This is what people call the postnational state. I say the previous prime minister, but as I say, the new government seems no different from the old government. "Postnational state" refers to a perspective that acknowledges the diminishing importance of the nation-state, Canada, and national identity in favour of global, regional and local entities. It does not mean the end of nationalism, but rather a shift in focus and power dynamics where supranational organizations, multinational corporations and globalized culture play increasingly significant roles.

What does "supranational organizations" mean? A supranational organization is like the United Nations, many nations. We talk about multinational corporations. What is a multinational corporation? Well, Brookfield would be a multinational corporation because it has holdings in many companies. There can be a government that, maybe, has some considerable expertise in these areas and a shiny new face that was both head of a United Nations body and also head of Brookfield. This is part of what we are drifting down.

The whole thing about looking at a postnational state suggests that national identity and loyalty are becoming less central as other forms of belonging and identity gain prominence. If we are going to have an open door to coming into Canada, effectively Canadian citizenship will mean less, and I do not think Canadian citizenship means less at all. We also have postnational citizenship, the idea that citizenship is no longer solely defined by national borders and that new forms of participation and belonging are emerging.

Now, I am the great-grandchild of Canadian immigrants on one side and the great-great-great-great-grandchild of Canadian immigrants on the other side. That makes me a Canadian. I can tell everyone here that my family has contributed to building this country, as every Canadian immigrant family has all the way along. We build and grow this country, and we are proud of this country and the contributions made by everybody who comes here and makes sure they build lives here, build families here, seek opportunities here and develop this great country into what it could be. To change that, where somebody can get Canadian citizenship very easily, cheapens the work we have done, everything we have accomplished in this country and what we build here for all generations.

• (1715)

It would be a loophole, as we have said, and it needs to be fixed. It needs to be addressed, because if it is not addressed this time, it will have to come back to the House and get addressed another time.

What do I mean by that? This is my third term as a parliamentarian. I have seen a number of ministers of immigration, and it has been an absolute disaster. Canada went from being a country where about 350,000 people, maximum, were new immigrants per year, to 1.2 million per year, for two years. I can tell members pretty clearly that it had no connection with the reduced health care that occurred across Canada and with the reduced housing that occurred, the housing crisis and the health care crisis. Those have no connection, because we can increase demand without necessarily increasing supply, if we do not believe in actual economic rules.

However, all Canadians face this because of a more or less disastrous policy. As a result, one minister got shuffled out, and then the next minister came in and reversed many of those policies. There was an impact from that reversal. That reversal caused this: A whole bunch of people had been given expectations about what the path to becoming a Canadian would be, and all of a sudden that changed. That changed whether someone was in a post-secondary institution or just on their pathway to becoming a Canadian citizen. All of a sudden, new roadblocks were put in their way. Delays were incurred. Effectively, people were pushed out of the queue, and that is not meeting expectations.

People build their lives, and it is an onerous process to become a Canadian citizen. Sometimes it takes five to seven years. It is a long process. People have to be committed to it and want to become Canadians. It is a prize to actually get in here and contribute to this society. We are honoured to have such great people come into our country and contribute here, but an open door does not make that worth its while. We have to close that broadly opened door so we can actually have a managed system like the one we used to have.

When I was on the immigration committee, I guarantee we received anonymous phone calls from bureaucrats talking about how badly the system was being run by the party on the other side and how there was no managerial control being used. The Liberals effectively opened the doors, shortcutting a whole bunch of security processes in order to just push the number of people coming into Canada.

This is speculation, but one of the reasons is that the Liberals did not want to actually see the GDP of Canada go down, because their policies across the way were punitive to the economy. If we are just increasing the number of people, of course there is a GDP associated with new people, but if we look at the actual math, we can see the math actually shows that our GDP per capita was not increasing. There was a problem with that, because we were no longer meeting our growth as a country. Inflation was more than our GDP. That is a problem. It is a problem in any country, and we cannot just paper over it by throwing a whole bunch more people into Canada. That would be increasing one number without a quality increase.

I have always speculated, and I do not mind saying it in this House of Commons, that the reason the Liberals intentionally make a mess of this file is that they have a large constituency that profits from the middle of the immigration mess. They have all kinds of consultants, and I think that one of their previous ministers of immigration was actually from that very constituency, the ones who actually make money from legal representation, consulting and everything else. Of course, billions of dollars of taxpayer money goes off the table for what is often a very long process of getting Canadian citizenship. It is a very big constituency, and I know my colleagues on the other side of the House profit from that, because they collect money from it. It is a bit of an aberration.

Let us not forget something here. The first-generation limit was introduced in 2009. It was a response to the 2006 Lebanon crisis, where Canada spent \$94 million evacuating 15,000 “Canadians of convenience”, as they were called at the time: people who held citizenship but had little or no connection to Canada. I see that, on the other side of the House, they have no hesitancy to run up the numbers in Canada; \$94 million is \$94 million, and we cannot repeat that again. We have to make sure that the people we are actually helping across the world when there are actual conflagrations, as there are all the time and we are expecting more and more, are actually Canadians and actually will continue to contribute to our society going forward.

• (1720)

As Daniel Béland, a political science professor at McGill, puts it, “Canadians living abroad sometimes can be a burden for the government in the sense that if we need to evacuate them, during an

armed conflict, or if they come back to the country, to seek health care and so forth.” That is part and parcel of being Canadian. It is just not open to everybody all around the world. We have to make sure that we understand what it means to be Canadian, the value of Canadian citizenship.

Let me be fair. We support, again, the concept of restoring the citizenship of lost Canadians. We support, clearly, treating adopted children the same as biological children when it comes to citizenship, but these provisions were largely addressed in Senator Martin's bill, Bill S-245. They do not justify the massive overreach in Bill C-3, nor in Bill C-71.

I have a quote here, on the commitment we talked about: “Introducing tens of thousands of new [Canadians] without a robust integration plan is reckless. Our social infrastructure is buckling, and health care is under severe pressure. The lack of a clear strategy for accommodating this potential population surge only heightens concerns.” What is the surge we are talking about here? We think there are about 115,000 people who would immediately qualify over the first five years of this program, and then continuing all the way through, because once they have a connection to Canada, their children do, etc., from children to children. This is something that is going to continue to escalate until it is addressed, until it is actually amended. In doing our job here, we look at making sure that this is the case.

There are also logistical factors. This is going to cost over \$20 million just for administration, per year, as these come through our IRCC department. Again, government members do not understand the numbers, even though the Parliamentary Budget Officer has clearly put the numbers on a plate for them. They will not even quote the number of how many people this is going to affect. This is just ignoring what is actually happening out there. They do have some modelling. They do have some clarity that they have been provided on this, but they do not want to see that.

I am suggesting that maybe they are doing that for a reason. They are putting some canards out here to make sure there is some debate that continues to spend time in the House of Commons, as opposed to coming up with a real bill that actually gets things done.

This arose from a court ruling, a superior court ruling in Ontario. People do not really know this, but a superior court is a lower court. It is not the Supreme Court, as one of my colleagues on the other side said this morning. It was appealable. It was not a great decision, because this is already dealt with. Although it is not a law, there is a process by which the Minister of Immigration, and one of my colleagues on this side said that this is how it is dealt with currently, can actually deal with these lost Canadians very easily with her current power. She knows that. The government knows that, but it will not admit it.

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That is the problem here. The government is doing something here, but it already has tools to address it, and it is widening the whole approach to this to make sure we are doing something. Most Canadians would say, "What are you doing, and why are you doing it?" It effectively says that we are opening the door here, for all intents and purposes, for the foreseeable future and confusing everybody, causing some problems that we are going to have to address one way or another.

Canadian citizenship is not just a passport. It is a privilege, a responsibility and a bond to this country. Bill C-3 would weaken that bond. It would allow people with minimal ties to Canada to claim the same rights and benefits as those who have lived, worked and contributed here.

• (1725)

Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it will be a big honour for me to attend a citizenship ceremony in my riding of Hamilton Centre on Canada Day. Definitely, I will welcome lots of my new fellow citizens.

When would the hon. member like to see this legislation in committee?

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague to the House of Commons. As I told him in my speech, I have already been in committee looking at this bill. I would like to see it go to committee once it has the proper amendments put into it so it is presented as something we can debate at committee and we can discuss the pros and cons of it.

If I could make a suggestion that would get it to committee very quickly, I would ask, as the government is very good at copying previous legislation, why do the Liberals not just copy the previous bill, Bill S-245? It would solve the most immediate problems that they see as problems without opening a great swath that Canadians will not support.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Centre's speech was a continuation of the criticism over the government's inept handling of the immigration file. The Bloc Québécois has asked hundreds of questions on the issue, particularly about Roxham Road and about the Century Initiative and its target of 500,000 immigrants a year.

However, there was a court ruling, and we must respond to it. In his speech, my colleague said that there are big holes. Am I to assume that if the Conservatives were in power, they would appeal the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling? If so, on what grounds?

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, it was an Ontario Superior Court judge who ruled that the existing law was unconstitutional.

I think that we should also consider the opinions of other judges who have ruled on constitutional issues since then. We should not rely on a single judge from a single court, namely the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Perhaps we should also consider the opinions of other judges who are more familiar with constitutional law.

[English]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have heard repeatedly, both inside the House and outside, how the Liberal government has broken the immigration system and not just Canadians' trust, but our ability to serve new Canadians. Through my office, I found out that getting an initial work permit or an extension has gone from 60 days to 210 days. Spousal applications for people already here in Canada used to be one year. Now the service standard is about three years. Family reunification is now over four years.

I am wondering if my colleague would comment on the changes the government is making without even knowing how many new people will be affected and how the current wait times will be affected.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I have an office in Calgary that is well known for its casework in immigration, and that casework in immigration is becoming more and more backlogged. The speculation on that is that the government is, pardon my phrase, ragging the puck so it does not have to deal with these issues. It can just drag things out, and hopefully people will eventually get the hint and move on. There are very few ways it can deal with the number of excess files it has at this point in time.

I think it is going to continue to be that way. The Liberals are going to continue to bluster and will not be able to meet their own targets. How are they going to meet the timelines? The expected timelines are being extended all the time, and the government is outside its targeted guidelines repeatedly. This is something members of Parliament have to continue to give feedback on and—

• (1730)

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality of the situation is that when Pierre Poilievre sat in the Conservative caucus with Stephen Harper, they cancelled the ability for someone to sponsor a mother, a father or a grandparent. They cancelled it and did not allow people to do that. They also hit the delete button on the skilled worker employment program, literally deleting hundreds of thousands of people in the system even though they spent thousands of dollars individually to get into the system.

The member makes reference to the waiting time for marriages, which is not three years, but I can tell him that under Stephen Harper, it was up to six years. If I were provided the time, I could assure the member that the immigration system today is better. We finally have a new Prime Minister who is committed to not only improving the system, but ensuring the long-term stability of the program.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, that member continually brings up what happened 15 years ago, and then he spouts it off as if it is actually fact. He talks about reality. I am not sure that member recognizes reality. He talks about "cancel and delete", yet we talk about the number of Canadians who were brought in during the Stephen Harper years. It increased substantially, and that member does not really seem to want to grasp that.

Every government has challenges with this file. Until the Justin Trudeau government, our immigration system was renowned as professional around the world. It no longer is, and that is for a reason. The Liberals messed it up.

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, under the Trudeau government, there was indeed some abuse in terms of migration, and Quebec paid the heaviest price. Most of the temporary migrants who were entering the country and putting pressure on the system came to Quebec. The federal government owes Quebec a considerable debt, but we are never going to get that money back.

There is a general consensus on the bill before us. We had these debates in the previous Parliament. Why are my Conservative colleagues being so stubborn about keeping this bill from being passed?

[English]

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to my colleague because I was going to respond in French. However, he used the word “stubborn”, so I think I am going to have to respond in English.

Our job here is as His Majesty's loyal opposition. Members know that. There are gross holes in this legislation and the member knows that. He knows what happened at Roxham Road, and he knows how the Quebec government had to twist the federal government's arm after three years of Roxham Road in order to stop the flow of people who were just taking advantage of that slippage, where the border is not a border but the border is where there is an office with a border. That is ridiculous. That is a judge who does not know what they are doing. That is a government that does not know how to address a dumb situation.

Something we need to address here going forward, very clearly, is proper legislation, and this is anything but proper legislation. I do not think it is being stubborn for us to do the work that Canadians expect of us in order to get good legislation passed in the House.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been unable to get a number from the government today of how many people this might impact. We have the PBO number. It was 115,000 people, so it is at least that many people or it could be more. What are the ways in which that many new citizens might impact Canada when it comes to the work that needs to be done in the bureaucracy and the cost to Canadians for things like old age security and other things?

• (1735)

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked me that question because I am often focused on this country's economy. The number that the PBO came up with is about \$20.4 million per year in additional administration costs to get this program across, if it is approved in this way. That escalates going forward, of course, and that means more cost to Canadians. We can think about that as it continues down, with children upon children upon children. Eventually, we are going to have to deal with this, and the sooner the better.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this piece of legislation this evening here in the House.

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After 10 years of the tired Liberal government, our immigration system is broken. I say that somewhat with a heavy heart because I look across at my colleagues and I know they like to be referred to as a new government. It is anything but new. What the Liberals have done is they have played musical chairs with their front bench. Most of them are the same people, just in different positions. The same goes for the parliamentary secretaries; they are the same people.

The system is broken, obviously for even a better reason than just them playing their musical chairs. Over the past 10 years of the Trudeau Liberals, because that is who they are, they have had seven ministers of citizenship and immigration. I am sure that is a historic first if we look back in the history of Parliament. They have had seven. Basically, they have not been able to find a competent person to handle the file, which has resulted in the dilemma we have today.

They often refer to the previous Conservative government with the great former prime minister Stephen Harper. We had a plan. I am the former parliamentary secretary to the minister of citizenship and immigration in the Harper government. We had a plan.

Our plan was predicated on the following: 65% of newcomers coming to Canada would have to come through our economic streams. This would be someone who had some working knowledge of either of the two official languages of the country and had a skill or a profession, something they could do where they could contribute to their families and to Canadian society from day one when they arrived in Canada. We had understandably set aside 25% for family reunifications, recognizing the importance of keeping families together, and we had set aside 10% for compassionate streams such as asylum seekers and refugees.

In all of that, we had a reasonable and sustainable number of people we would welcome into Canada on an annual basis. In came the Trudeau Liberals, these Liberals we are now facing across the aisle in their third minority government in a row, and out goes this plan and in comes helter-skelter, as far as managing the entire immigration file is concerned.

Today's asylum backlog, for example, stands at over 280,000 people as of March 31 of just this year, which translates to a four-year wait for asylum backlog. These are people who are waiting to get a response. Almost 29,000 people have failed to appear for their removal proceedings, and they cannot be located in the country, because there is no system in place for that to happen.

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This is what happens when we have no plan, no control and no semblance of organization on how we should manage a ministry of the Crown. The government planned to cap study permits in 2024, and then blew right past their cap by over 30,000 people. In fact, in 2024, if we add all the streams together, over a million people came to Canada at a time when we have a housing crisis, we have a job crisis, our young people cannot find work and there are 1,500 encampments just in the province of Ontario alone. People cannot find a place to live.

I would argue that when we welcome people to our country, we should provide them with opportunities, opportunities like my parents had when they came here from Greece. When they came here, they worked hard. They got a good paycheque, which afforded them the opportunity to buy a home and grow their family.

Those opportunities and that Canadian dream, under these Liberals, have gone completely out the window. These Liberals have eroded the trust in our immigration system, and under their watch, wait times for application processing is completely out of control. Now, they want to add to the chaos.

I believe being a Canadian citizen is one of the greatest privileges one can have. Canadians died for the rights and privileges afforded to our citizens. Some of us may take that for granted on a daily basis, but 66,000 brave men lost their lives in the First World War, 44,000 brave soldiers lost their lives in the Second World War, 516 people lost their lives in the Korean effort, another 159 people lost their lives in Afghanistan and 29 in Cyprus and other efforts around the world. They lost their lives for those rights and privileges that we have today, and we need to take that seriously.

● (1740)

We have a responsibility, when we bestow that Canadian citizenship, that huge privilege, on somebody. It means something. We do not water that down.

Canadians have the right to vote. I would argue that people who have a right to vote should have contributed or contribute to this country, as many of our families do and as Canadians do from coast to coast on a daily basis.

Now, Bill C-3, the bill we are discussing, weakens Canadian citizenship by eliminating that first-generation limit, allowing parents born abroad to pass citizenship to their children born abroad, generation after generation, as long as one parent has spent 1,095 non-consecutive days in Canada prior to the birth of the child. That does not mean 1,095 days in the last five years, which is the standard today for a permanent resident to become a Canadian citizen. It is just 1,095 days in their life.

A student who came to Canada, studied, spent three years here, obtained a Canadian citizenship, left the country and grew a family somewhere else can bestow that citizenship to their child born in that country, in perpetuity, to grandchildren and so forth, without ever having lived another day in our country. That does not make sense to Canadians who worked hard to earn that right of citizenship.

Like many colleagues in the House, I have attended citizenship ceremonies. What a huge privilege it was and what an emotional

experience it was for me to be there because it brought me back to thoughts of my parents when they came to this country. It is always meaningful for the people who are being bestowed with citizenship on that day. There is nothing more emotional for me in speeches that I have given on the subject, than that day when a citizenship judge affords me the opportunity to say a few words. My closing comment, when I look at the crowd of 30, 40 or sometimes 50 people obtaining Canadian citizenship that day, are, "Welcome to the Canadian family", knowing very well that those folks had come here, worked hard, done all of the right things, waited their time and earned the right and privilege of Canadian citizenship.

We should not look at this legislation without considering the importance and the value of Canadian citizenship. The government has not completed a cost analysis, nor has it told Canadians the number of new citizens that Bill C-3 would create or the cost to taxpayers, especially in health care, pensions and so forth. When we ask Liberals the questions, they say that they do not know, that they are not certain and that they cannot put a number on it.

Any other time, the Liberals would look at the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report and recite those numbers with glee. This time, the Liberals have conveniently decided they are not going to refer, at all, to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who has said that this is going to affect some 115,000 people, at the very least, and initially cost Canadians \$21 million. Why the Liberals are choosing to ignore the Parliamentary Budget Officer's analysis is perplexing, to say the least. I am sure the Speaker is having difficulty understanding the reasons why as well, because no reasonable person could come up with a logical answer to that question.

Worse, there would be no criminal check required for new citizens. The government requires criminal background checks for other immigration processes, so why would it not want to do that for this stream of people who they are suggesting come in through Bill C-3. It makes no sense. I would argue that a primary responsibility of a responsible government of any country is the safety and the security of its citizens.

● (1745)

Canadian families need to know that when they take their children to school, to a shopping mall, to a community centre or to a park, the people walking beside them have been properly vetted and are law-abiding residents and citizens of this country. However, the bill does not provide for that background check.

Not vetting individuals coming into the country raises a lot of questions, but it is in line with the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies that we have seen over the years. The Liberals appear really comfortable with potentially allowing people convicted of serious crimes such as rape, murder and terrorism to gain citizenship and have the opportunity to be in our communities. As bizarre as that sounds, if I were a Liberal member of Parliament, God forbid, I would ask, "Why would I not want to do a background check on people coming into the country?"

A 30-year-old who has never lived here before but is the son of somebody who has been out of the country would find out that the Liberals have passed a bill, and they could automatically become a Canadian citizen. They could come to Canada as a Canadian citizen with no background check. That is amazing. That does not make sense to me, and I can assure members that it does not make sense to my constituents of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill. I represent one of the more diverse communities in the country, and I am positive it does not make sense to Canadians anywhere in this beautiful country of ours.

The people I feel most for are the immigrants who went through the traditional immigration processes. These immigrants went through vetting, proved they had a connection to Canada and did the hard work to acquire the privileges and rights bestowed upon them as Canadian citizens. Under the bill before us, their citizenship would become weaker.

To summarize some of these points, the government cannot tell us how many new citizens the bill would create. It cannot tell us the cost. Of course, the Liberals do not want to talk about cost. They recently put through a throne speech and have decided to spend half a trillion dollars without presenting a budget in Parliament so we can debate and discuss it.

Speaking of debating and discussing, I have heard Liberal members come up to the microphone, stand up in their spot and tell us that if we have amendments to Bill C-3, we should bring them to committee. They appear to be saying that they are amenable to looking at some reasonable amendments to the bill. Well, we can be forgiven for questioning the veracity and, really, the honesty of those comments because of a previous rendition of the bill. This is not a new bill. The Liberals purport to be a new government, but this is a cut-and-paste bill. This is Bill C-71 cut and pasted into Bill C-3.

To new members of Parliament elected on all sides of the House, the Liberals are saying, "Never mind, just take our word for it. It's good because we discussed it in the previous Parliament." That makes no sense because that legislation died when Parliament was stopped and then reached its end of life to go into an election. Members of Parliament should have a right to review it.

When one of those previous renditions, Bill S-245, came up for debate, there were no fewer than 40 amendments moved by Conservative members, all of which the Liberal-NDP coalition of the day voted against. They did not want to consider any one of the 40, and now they want us to look at this bill and say, "We'll take it to committee and consider it, and thank you for allowing us to present some amendments." Well, we know the record of my dear friends

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across the aisle on amendments, and we know how much consideration they will give them.

Current citizens who were born in Canada or immigrants who went through other processes to become citizens would definitely have their citizenships weakened with this proposed legislation. There is no plan to process the new applications in an already backlogged, broken system, and the government does not know the scale of the impact or, if they do know, are not willing to share it with Parliament. The question is simply this: Why are the Liberals doing this? Quite frankly, I am not surprised.

● (1750)

Over the last 10 years, the Liberals have continuously weakened Canada's immigration system and how we are perceived on the world stage. It is completely irresponsible to allow hundreds of thousands of immigrants into Canada, given the current challenges in the housing market. In fact, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, in its May 2025 report, linked record immigration to worsening housing affordability. We know what that means in all of our communities across the country, irrespective of whether people want to stand up in this place and try to defend that somehow.

Taxpayers have spent billions of dollars housing asylum seekers in hotels. The CMHC, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, acknowledges that we need some 3.5 million more homes by 2030 to provide shelter for people who are already here. Here we are wanting to add to that, with a number we do not know. The government is not telling us. It is adding hundreds of thousands of new people into a housing market that is already undersupplied, overpriced and unfair to all who are trying to afford housing, especially our young people who have done everything right and cannot afford to buy a home in the community they grew up and would love to grow a family in.

The job picture also looks a lot less rosy. Our youth cannot land entry-level jobs. Youth unemployment is at 20% in some parts of the country. Unemployment rose to 7% overall in May, the highest rate since the pandemic. Forecasts show that Canada may shed another 100,000 jobs by the fall. The government is adding hundreds of thousands of new people into a job market that is already at its weakest point in years. It is simply reckless.

The Liberal government must create an environment in which new immigrants and Canadians can succeed. That is not happening currently. I have heard stories from my riding in which immigrants who came here 10 years ago are now considering leaving Canada, because the promise they were made has been broken by the Liberal government.

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The bill also touches upon children who are adopted internationally. That is something very close to me and very dear to my heart. Back in 1993, my wife and I flew to Guatemala City, where we had the honour and the privilege of meeting our children for the first time. My family came together by something called the miracle of adoption. Therefore, I applaud that the bill recognizes that those children who come into the country will become Canadian citizens. Nothing felt more unwieldy to my wife and me when we arrived in Canada and had to wait a period of time before our infant children, a biological brother and sister, could become Canadian citizens. This bill will correct that, which I applaud.

As my colleagues on this side of the House have said previously, I am glad it is resolving the issue of lost Canadians as well.

It has been 10 years, and our immigration system is in shambles. The Liberals are welcoming hundreds of thousands of new immigrants in a housing crisis, a health care crisis and a deteriorating job market. What is worse, the basics, such as processing applications, are taking much longer, and backlogs continue to persist. The government promises to fix issues that continue to be broken. It is just not fulfilling its promises.

In the last minute I have, I want to say that it is just more of the same. The Liberals want to pass a bill that would add to that chaos, of course, cost taxpayers more and weaken everyone's citizenship.

Only common-sense Conservatives will restore order and integrity to our immigration and citizenship system by tightening requirements, clearing backlogs, streamlining processing, respecting the will of the folks who want to come to Canada through normal immigration channels, welcoming them and giving them every opportunity to succeed in our great country.

• (1755)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the tail end of his comments, the member talked about Conservatives having the ability to restore order. There was a great deal of disorder when I was the critic for immigration. I recall that the member and I were sitting around the table at the immigration committee, and I had the opportunity to highlight, in a previous question, some of that disorder.

However, there is good news for individuals following the debate. I would suggest two quick points.

One is this. The reason we are having the debate today is an Ontario Superior Court decision. That decision has to be respected sometime in November of this year, which means we have to pass some form of legislation.

The other aspect I would highlight is that our new Prime Minister, with the administration, has made it very clear that we are working toward sustainable immigration levels. That deals with both aspects.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on the Superior Court decision.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I understand the need to present a new piece of legislation, but this is not a new piece; it is a cut and paste of the old piece. The member knows very well that

this has gone through committee in the past, with both Bill C-71 and the Senate bill, Bill S-245. The member also knows very well that for us to consider legislation to fix what he is saying and address the issue of the court ruling, we need to fix this legislation.

With the way it is written, it is bad legislation. It needs to be fixed because we cannot give citizenship out in perpetuity with the excuse that somehow we have to address a court decision. Yes, there is a court decision, but even more important now is to ensure that we put in place a piece of legislation that would resolve the very issues we are talking about here today.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, much has been said about the impact of the immigration system on constituency offices, so before I ask my question, I would like to commend the invaluable Christiane Dupuis, who has helped constituents navigate the immigration process. Now she is now retiring. I want to extend my best wishes to dear Christiane on her retirement. I look forward to celebrating with her as the summer holidays approach. I want to thank her for helping the people who have chosen to settle in Granby and Shefford.

That being said, like my Conservative colleagues, I see problems with the immigration system. Nonetheless, we think Bill C-3 is a step in the right direction for the Citizenship Act. Much more must be done, of course, including a complete review of the act.

Nonetheless, this was our fourth extension. The judge has set a new deadline for the fourth time: November 20. Has my colleague analyzed the impact of not complying with this decision from the Ontario Superior Court of Justice?

[English]

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Christiane Dupuis for her good work in helping the member in her work. I wish her every success in her future endeavours.

It is important that we address the issue of the court decision. What we are saying here today is that we hope our colleagues in the Bloc and, quite frankly, in the Liberal Party will join us in ensuring that the piece of legislation we put through this House addresses the important issues we have raised here today.

We are going to be proposing amendments at committee, for sure, and we would like those amendments to be considered very seriously by our friends from the Bloc and our friends from the Liberal Party, because at the end of the day, we are here to provide good legislation that addresses issues and resolves problems for Canadians. We need to work together toward that. The government needs to listen to those amendments and come along with us as we implement them.

• (1800)

[Translation]

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech on this bill reminded me of a citizenship ceremony that took place a few years ago in Deux-Montagnes, in my riding. When people get their citizenship, it is a very emotional moment. People are happy to become Canadians.

What does my colleague think of this bill? Does he not think that it should be referred directly to committee?

[English]

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, citizenship ceremonies are very emotional, as I said in my speech, and they are very important in the lives of the folks who are obtaining their citizenship on that day.

I certainly believe that this bill needs to be studied a lot further. I hope the member opposite will speak to her colleagues in the Liberal Party to seriously consider amendments that we will be putting forward for this legislation, because as it stands right now, we cannot support the legislation. We agree with some of the points, as I said. We agree with recognizing lost citizens and we agree with adopted children obtaining their citizenship right away. However, we do not agree and will never agree with giving people who are not born in this country the right to perpetual Canadian citizenship without having contributed to our country.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you are doing a fantastic job.

I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent speech today, especially the heartwarming tale of his adopted children.

The Liberal government itself even admits that it has broken the immigration system. Its own immigration website states that concern about immigration is at the highest level it has been in two decades. The government notes that it is tied to concerns about the impact on housing and public services.

Considering the government does not even know how many people this bill would affect, does my colleague think that it would increase or alleviate concerns about how badly the Liberals have bungled the immigration file?

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that the legislation, as it has been presented by the Minister of Immigration, would make things a lot worse if passed. It would continue to get worse as long as government members keep playing musical chairs in the tired Liberal government. There have been seven different immigration ministers in a 10-year period.

The government is not looking at the file seriously and this is, I would argue, a very important file for Canadians across the country, especially newcomers and immigrants who have worked so hard to obtain that right to come into our country and have done everything in the right way to obtain their citizenship. This legislation would continue to exacerbate the problems and make them a lot worse than they are today.

We are here to hold the government to account. Hopefully, the government will come on board with us to make this a better piece

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of legislation so that we can pass it through the House unanimously at some point.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have spent all day criticizing the broken immigration system, and that is fair enough. We feel the same way and agree with their criticism. However, was it worth spending an entire day debating the principle of a bill that basically poses few problems? My colleague believes so.

Given that my colleague identified some things that he agreed with and others that he did not, are we to understand that, when it comes time to pass this bill in principle, the Conservatives would be against sending this bill to committee and would rather appeal the Superior Court ruling?

• (1805)

[English]

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, of course, we want to study the bill. We want to propose amendments to the bill that would make it a better piece of legislation. We have spent one day on it. It appears that the member has an issue with our spending all day on it. I would argue that it is not enough because the long-term ramifications of passing through a bad piece of legislation like this could be catastrophic for the immigration system and for Canada.

Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

As we debate Bill C-3 today, we go back to the basics of what it means to be Canadian. We are not a postnational state, as my colleagues across the aisle would love us to believe. Canadians exist from coast to coast to coast. There are a great variety of experiences that make up our Canadian identity, but they are bounded within our great landmass. Canadian citizenship means something. It has weight in this world. For it to continue to have weight, there must be a cost. Nothing that is free continues to have any worth, any weight or any merit.

The Conservatives want nothing more than to preserve and increase the value of Canadian citizenship. We value and respect what it means to be a Canadian. The basic cost that Conservatives want to maintain in the price of Canadian citizenship is for there to be a continued connection to Canada. Unfortunately, my dear colleagues across the aisle do not value their peers who live coast to coast to coast. My most esteemed colleagues across the aisle would rather cheapen the value of our Canadian identity by siding with Canadians of convenience.

Let me repeat that concept one more time but more slowly: Canadians of convenience. Are these our brothers and sisters in arms? When push comes to shove in our fracturing global order, can we count on these Canadians of convenience to advance our national interests alongside us, or are they just people who would love to have a Canadian passport?

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Bill C-3 would cheapen what it means to be a Canadian, and it would extend citizenship by descent beyond the first generation. In 2009, we, the Conservatives, enforced a first-generation limit. However, under Bill C-3, any person born abroad to a Canadian citizen who has also been born abroad would receive Canadian citizenship. In other words, the children of children born outside of Canada would be considered Canadian.

Before we critique this, it is important to note that the Liberals have made a conditional requirement of what they call a “substantial connection”. This requirement would allow parents to pass Canadian citizenship onto their children generation after generation as long as one parent spends only 1,095 non-consecutive days in Canada prior to the birth of the child.

That is just three years of non-consecutive time in Canada, and there is no need for a criminal record check. Merely three years of non-consecutive time is absolutely too low a standard to establish anyone as a fellow Canadian. At the absolute minimum, the three years should be consecutive and there should be a criminal record check. Without these absolute minimum standards, there can be no progress on this bill.

The goal of the Conservatives is simple: We want to foster generations of Canadians with a national spirit and who feel themselves to be truly Canadian. There is no way to do this unless they live here with us as fellow Canadians for some degree of time. This is why their presence in Canada has to be sustained and consecutive so that they live, learn and work beside their fellow Canadians.

If Bill C-3 passes in its current state, how is it fair to legitimate immigrants who spend years building lives here, from coast to coast, when the Liberal government is ready to give citizenship to people who have never even lived in Canada for a sustained period? The government has cheapened what it means to be Canadian. We will all suffer for it.

• (1810)

With that established, let us quickly address what Bill C-3 could be, if it was precise and focused. The core historical problem we should be addressing is what has been framed as “lost Canadians”. These are people who either had Canadian citizenship and lost it, or thought they were entitled to Canadian citizenship but never received it. This was the original issue Conservatives gave support for and for which we will continue to give support. Historically, citizenship has been revoked due to issues like restrictions on dual citizenship or a child not being registered after being born abroad.

Section 8 of the Citizenship Act says all individuals born abroad to Canadian parents after February 14, 1977, had to apply to reinstate their Canadian citizenship before they turned 28 years old. In short, Conservatives wanted to restore citizenship to individuals who had lost it due to non-application for retention or application rejections under the former Citizenship Act, section 8. Some individuals lost citizenship at the age of 28. These generally included people born as the second generation abroad between February 15, 1977, and April 16, 1981, who turned 28. This was also the original content of Conservative Senator Yonah Martin's private member's bill, Bill S-245, which plays a more direct role in addressing concerns about the first-generation rule.

What I want to emphasize is how specific the problem was and how tailored the solution could be. What we have instead, with Bill C-3, is the use of this originally narrow problem of lost Canadians to spearhead broad, sweeping changes to the fundamentals of Canadian citizenship. Conservatives truly, fully support the provisions that relate to lost Canadians, but we cannot allow the pretext of solving the lost Canadians issue to lead to a sweeping change in what it means to be Canadian.

With this little historical background out of the way, let us return to considering Bill C-3 as a whole. The debate on Bill C-3 boils down to one simple question: What does it mean to be a Canadian? Ultimately, do we truly value what it means to live from coast to coast to coast, or does place have no meaning?

I have often heard culture defined as a way of life, and a way of life is something learned by doing, learned beside people who are doing it. In this way, citizenship is like a trade, and it requires apprenticeship. To apprentice as a Canadian, one must live in Canada beside Canadians and learn a way of life over several consecutive years.

However, in the current state of Bill C-3, the Liberals want to serve Canadians of convenience who hold Canadian citizenship but live abroad and do not participate in Canadian society. Bill C-3 serves Canadians of convenience, but does it serve Canadians?

Only common-sense Conservatives will restore order to immigration and citizenship. We will restore integrity to citizenship by tightening requirements, because this is how we preserve the value of what it means to be Canadian.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-3 is intended to right a past wrong. In 2009, Stephen Harper's Conservative government passed legislation limiting citizenship by descent to the first generation. This has had significant repercussions. Individuals with genuine ties to our country have been excluded. It has also negatively affected Canadians whose children were born abroad.

In 2023, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice struck down these provisions, and we did not appeal that decision, given the unacceptable consequences these provisions had had.

Will my colleague work with us and support this bill, which will right a past wrong?

[English]

Michael Ma: Mr. Speaker, my colleague responded earlier with the same answer, which is that we will support the bill with the amendments we are proposing to address specific issues and to not broaden the overall Citizenship Act to allow generations and generations abroad. If these people really have intentions of being Canadian, it is easy for them to do so and still apply those rules. To my colleague, I say the Conservatives will support it with the amendments we are proposing.

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to my colleague. Maybe he was not here in the last Parliament, but the government's management of immigration was mediocre.

The influx of migrants into Quebec placed tremendous pressure on our health care system and social services, but Quebec was not paid back in full. Would my colleague not agree that this is a gross injustice?

[English]

Michael Ma: Mr. Speaker, that is precisely part of the problem. We have been asking the Liberal government, in terms of numbers, how many people would be impacted, and the answer is that the Liberals do not know. We asked how much it would cost us, and they do not know. Again, how is it going to impact each of the provinces, including Quebec? They obviously do not know that answer either.

What is the government doing putting a bill forward without having prepared for the consequences and impact of such a bill being implemented?

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed the member's speech. In particular, at the start of it, he was talking about the issue of Canadians of convenience. When I meet with people back home, especially people who have immigrated to Canada, they had to work hard. They had to prove they were solvent and had the means to be able to be a contributing member of society.

When we look at the bill, we see what the Liberals are doing with what it means to become a Canadian citizen. They have really cheapened what it takes to become a Canadian citizen. I am just wondering if my colleague has any thoughts on what the Liberals are doing with the bill in really cheapening what it takes and what it means to become Canadian.

Michael Ma: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do, per my speech. It used to mean something to be a Canadian, to be carrying that Canadian passport and feeling safe around the world, carrying that passport and knowing that it is respected. By cheapening this passport, it becomes almost like something we could get from online sales.

As I said in my speech, what does it mean to be a Canadian, to understand and know our values, to have lived with Canadian colleagues and friends in Canada and to understand our culture and understand our way of life? We would be giving out and granting citizenship for generation after generation of people, some of whom perhaps, as the colleague across the aisle admitted, may not even

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have the intention of wanting to be Canadian. This legislation would allow them to do so.

In terms of the other point that the member raised, very rightly, when we talk about the broken immigration system, we have a lot of people who came into the country under the pathways program, especially over—

● (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House on behalf of the people of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. Today, that honour comes with a sense of duty to speak clearly and seriously about the need to uphold the integrity of Canadian citizenship.

Let me begin by saying clearly and unequivocally, Conservatives support the court's decision in *Bjorkquist v. Canada*. Conservatives believe in the rule of law, and Conservatives believe that unjustifiable discrimination has no place in Canadian citizenship policy.

The court found the first-generation limit to be unconstitutional, and I respect that judgment, but Bill C-3 is not simply a thoughtful response to a court decision. It is a wholesale rewrite of citizenship policy that goes far beyond the scope of the ruling.

This bill is not about justice. It is about judgment. In this case, the government's judgment is deeply flawed, stretching far beyond what most Canadians would consider to be reasonable.

Let us talk about what is in the bill. Under Bill C-3, Canadian citizenship could be automatically passed down for multiple generations born outside of Canada, so long as just one parent has spent just 1,095 non-consecutive days, or three years of non-consecutive days, at any time in their life, on Canadian soil.

As an example, it would allow the 50-year-old child of a 75-year-old who left Canada at age 3 to claim Canadian citizenship even if that 50-year-old had never been to Canada. Let us be clear, that is not a strong connection to Canada. That is not growing up here, working here, paying taxes here, or raising a family here. It is not even vacationing here.

There are many other ridiculous examples. Vacations, work trips and conferences would all count. Getting stranded in Canada while in transit from one country to another because a snowstorm grounds their connecting flight would count as a night. I could go on.

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The bottom line is that this bill would make a number of people with minimal or no exposure to Canada eligible for Canadian citizenship ad infinitum, and IRCC could not tell the committee how many people this could be. Unlike many of the programs Canadians have to navigate, there would be no proof required. If one were willing to swear an affidavit that their parent spent 1,095 days here, the government would take their word for it. No boarding passes, holiday pictures, or receipts for poutine or perhaps maple-cured salmon would be required. What could go wrong?

Members do not need to take my word for it. Let us hear from some of the experts. We have heard repeatedly from experts with concerns about the bill. This is not actually a partisan issue. It is a policy issue. It is about what it means to be Canadian. It is about what a substantial connection is. It is about how we spend the half trillion dollars the Liberal government is proposing we approve without a budget. It is about whether people with no connection to Canada can suddenly discover their parents' Canadian roots when times get tough or they decide they would like to live somewhere else.

We have a refugee program, and we have an immigration program. This is neither. This bill does an end run around those programs and would allow an ill-defined, undetermined number of people to jump the line without having to prove their value or show their work.

We support correcting past injustices. We support restoring citizenship to real lost Canadians, those caught in the bureaucratic net of outdated provisions, such as the former section 8 of the old Citizenship Act. These are people who were raised in Canada, have lived their lives as Canadians and who were denied the rights and privileges of citizenship due to paperwork or legislative gaps. They are Canadians in every meaningful sense, and they deserve to be treated as such.

We also support the provisions regarding adopted children, which would ensure children adopted abroad, like those of my colleague who spoke earlier, are treated equally under the law and are able to pass on citizenship in the same way as biological children.

This is a matter of fairness and equality. We have always backed those provisions, and we continue to support them now, but what we cannot and will not support is a system that waters down the meaning of citizenship and creates an unmanageable administrative burden on already strained government services.

● (1825)

Let us look at the numbers. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has estimated that Bill C-3 could immediately add about 115,000 new citizens, most of whom do not live in Canada, yet the government has provided no estimate for how many could be added in the long term as new generations become eligible. These new citizens would be eligible for services like old age security, GIS and health services, yet many of them would never have paid a single dollar of income tax in Canada.

The government has admitted that it has not completed a proper cost analysis. In committee hearings, IRCC officials acknowledge that they simply do not know how many people the bill would affect or what the long-term financial implications would be. That is

not good governance or responsible legislation; it is just recklessness, and it is particularly troubling given the state of our public services today: Canadians are waiting weeks for passports, months for citizenship applications and years for permanent residency; housing is unaffordable; and health care is stretched to the brink. Resources are finite, and the bill would do nothing to prioritize those already in Canada who need help.

This is the bottom line: The so-called “substantial connection test” in the bill is vague and inadequate, 1,095 non-consecutive days can be spread across decades and attested to without proof, there is no requirement for a criminal record check and there is no clear plan on how IRCC would verify or process the influx of new applicants.

Conservatives are proposing simple, reasonable amendments to the bill: Make the 1,095 days consecutive, and disqualify those with serious criminal records. These are common-sense safeguards, and the government should accept them and adopt them as its own, as they have with many of our other policies.

The Court gave the government a mandate to act but not to overreach. What Canadians need, expect and deserve is a balanced approach, one that upholds the charter and fixes past wrongs but preserves the integrity of Canadian citizenship. Bill C-3 does not strike that balance in its current form.

Canadian citizenship is an incredible thing. It is more than just a legal status; it is a profound connection to one of the most free, diverse and democratic nations in the world. It reflects a shared commitment to values that define Canada: respect for human rights, the rule of law and pluralism.

For millions, becoming a Canadian citizen is the fulfillment of a dream, and for those of us lucky enough to be born into it, it is a privilege that we should never take for granted. The bill would create a slippery slope where citizenship would no longer be tied to a meaningful presence or a substantial connection to Canada. It risks transforming Canadian citizenship from a living commitment into a legacy entitlement, something passed down with little or no connection to our land, our laws or our culture.

It is worth remembering why the first-generation limit was introduced in the first place. After the 2006 crisis in Lebanon, Canada evacuated 14,000 citizens at a cost of \$94 million. Thousands returned to Lebanon shortly thereafter. That experience led to the realization that citizenship must come with responsibilities, not just rights. That is why a Conservative government enacted the first-generation limit in 2009, to restore integrity to our system. Bill C-3 goes far beyond correcting the unintentional oversights of that policy that were properly identified by the courts. It unacceptably rewrites the framework of Canadian citizenship in a way that undermines its integrity, dilutes its value and ignores the need for a balanced and principled approach.

Let me close by saying this: Conservatives believe in a strong, fair and principled citizenship regime, and that is what we would like to see in the bill.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1830)

[English]

HOUSING

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about housing. I have given notice that the responses the Liberal housing minister provided are unsatisfactory. They are unsatisfactory not just to me but to an entire generation of would-be and prospective homebuyers.

I have asked several questions in the House of the minister on housing. I know the Liberals like to say it is a new government, but they have been in power for 10 years and they cannot run away from their record. After 10 years, the reality is that people in the next generation are simply unable to afford a home.

The solution that has been proposed is that we can maybe live in modular homes, prefab homes or shipping containers, but what they have not proposed is a real solution to give the next generation of homebuyers choice in their housing. If a prefabricated home works for a family, that is excellent. If it does not, people should have a choice. They should not be forced into the government's one-size-fits-all proposal.

I want to share with the parliamentary secretary, who I hope will be providing some more enlightened answers this evening, just how bad it has gotten in my riding.

In the township of Scugog, according to the most recent Toronto Regional Real Estate Board report from May, the average price of a single-family detached home is now \$989,000. Since 2015, since the Liberals were elected, the average price of all types of housing in the township has increased by 208%. At the same time, the median salary in the township of Scugog is, after tax, \$92,000. That means housing is 10 times salary in the town. According to Statistics Canada, wages in the township have only increased by 9.5% since the last census period.

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This is if we can find an average-priced house in the township. If the parliamentary secretary were to go on realtor.ca and look today, she would not find any homes that are selling for \$989,000. She would find homes, for example on Waterbury Crescent, that are selling for \$1.4 million.

In the town of Georgina, according to TRREB's May report, the average cost for a single-family detached home is now \$808,000. Since 2015, since the Liberals were elected, the average price for all housing types in the town of Georgina has increased by 99.5%. At the same time, the median after-tax salary in the town is \$85,000. Housing is 9.5 times salary. Statistics Canada has said that wages in the town only increased 11% in the last census period.

Lastly, in the township of Uxbridge, it is \$1.2 million for a single-family detached home. Since 2015, the average prices for all housing are up 120%.

What this all means is that the average salary no longer buys the average house in the GTA, and almost all across the country. That is not right. In Toronto, for example, the Liberals handed out \$471 million in housing decelerator funds and we have 58% fewer housing starts.

I want the parliamentary secretary to help me make sense of this. First, can she confirm to the House that the Liberal promise is still to build 500,000 new homes a year? Second, she should tell us whether that promise of building 500,000 new homes this year will be met.

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a housing crisis in Canada. We agree on that. Too many Canadians are seeing their dream of owning their own home drift further and further out of reach. Families are struggling with the rising cost, and young people are being priced out of the housing market. Communities across the country are being squeezed by a housing system that is simply not working as it should.

I thank my colleague for that long list of current market prices. However, as we promised during the election campaign, and as the measures put forward so far by our new government show, we are going to tackle the housing crisis head-on with focus, determination and innovation.

We are taking action to make housing more affordable for all Canadians. We have eliminated the GST for first-time homebuyers on homes up to \$1 million and reduced the GST on homes up to \$1.5 million. I thank my opposition colleagues for voting with us on that matter.

We are also cutting taxes for the middle class, saving two-income families up to \$840 a year. This will help those looking to save up for their first home. Once again, I thank my colleagues for voting with us on that.

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We are not just talking about change; we are delivering it. We are using every tool at our disposal to build homes at a scale and speed not seen in decades, and we are doing so by working in partnership with provinces, territories, indigenous communities, municipalities, and the private and non-profit sectors.

Earlier today, I met with an organization that is working on building modular homes. Over the past few weeks, people have been referring to shipping containers.

• (1835)

[English]

Our colleagues across the aisle are referring to modular homes as shipping containers. Maybe that was 50 years ago. This is not the reality anymore.

[Translation]

The “build Canada homes” initiative is a pillar of our plan. It will transform the way homes are built in our country. It will accelerate the construction of affordable homes by streamlining construction timelines, leveraging public land and reducing financial barriers.

This initiative will help nearly double the rate of housing construction, but it will also support investments in modular and pre-fabricated construction to develop a modern, sustainable housing industry built on Canadian innovation, Canadian businesses, Canadian workers and Canadian materials.

We are not stopping there. We are working with provinces, territories and municipalities to cut development charges in half for all multi-unit buildings.

In addition, the housing accelerator fund is helping us remove barriers to development, build tens of thousands of homes across the country and increase our housing supply. We are building a unified Canadian economy, and we are committed to making housing more affordable and more accessible for all Canadians. That is the promise we made, and we have a plan to deliver on that promise and build Canada strong.

[English]

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's honest assessment of the crisis that we are in. It is important. We cannot get to a solution unless we accept the fact that there is a problem, so I thank her for that.

I disagree that certain types of housing solutions are from 15 years ago. We can go across the river and see the shipping container village in Gatineau that was opened in December 2024, so that is less than six months ago. I am okay with all types of housing, but I just want a choice, and I want Canadians to have a choice.

What I did not hear from the parliamentary secretary was an answer to the question. Is the commitment still to build 500,000 new homes every year? Second, will that commitment be met this year? These are simple questions; yes or no would be fine.

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, young Canadians can wait no longer to get the same home ownership opportunities that previous generations have had. Making Canada affordable for first-time

homebuyers is one of our top priorities. We have been saying this since Parliament resumed. We said it during the election campaign. We released plans during the election campaign. We are committed to making this happen and we are putting the tools in place to do so.

As we have said, we are committed to nearly doubling the rate of housing construction while creating a new housing industry built on Canadian technology, Canadian skilled workers and Canadian soft-wood lumber. I have photos here of all sorts of modular homes. My colleague is welcome to come look at them later.

The government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I must remind the hon. member that props are not allowed in the House.

• (1840)

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, the government is going to make housing more affordable. We will increase the housing supply to lower costs. Together, we will build Canada strong.

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just two months ago, Canadians were fully tuned into an election campaign set against the backdrop of a tariff war and uncertainty about Canada's relationship with our largest trading partner. Looking for a solution, they saw a Liberal leader who claimed to be a fresh face, declaring that he would be different from the last decade of inaction on the nation-building projects that we desperately need. He said he would be a change in direction from the Liberal policies that made it impossible to get anything built in this country, the very policies that he championed as Trudeau's economic adviser.

Last night on *Power Play*, his House leader basically admitted that the previous system was too onerous and Canadians have voted them in to now do big projects, another admission of 10 years of intentional sabotage of our energy resources, which the world needs and asks for.

It is important to note that the roles of the provinces, territories and indigenous leaders need to be respected, and Canadian workers and investors need to be prioritized. I want to give a shout-out to the excellent work of the transport committee into the wee hours of this morning to agree to 13 significant amendments to Bill C-5 that provide oversight, access to information, conflict of interest compliance, timelines, consultations and protections that will increase the confidence of Canadians moving forward.

Adjournment Proceedings

However, there is still a glaring failure that will continue to inhibit the restoration of our economy and growth to become the energy superpower that we must become. The “no new pipelines” law or Bill C-69, the shipping ban that applies only to vessels carrying oil and gas, the job-killing oil and gas production cap and the industrial carbon tax, which will raise the cost of everything on all projects, remain in place.

Giving a free pass to a few federally controlled projects obviously fails to generate the private sector growth that we need to restore powerful paycheques that should stimulate individual prosperity in every corner of this country long into the future. Sixteen major energy projects have been delayed or denied under the Liberal government, projects that could have brought in over \$176 billion. These are not merely devastating numbers; these are lost paycheques, lost opportunities and lost hope for thousands of Canadian families.

Canadians overwhelmingly rejected political parties at election time that, time and again, refused to recognize the vital importance of our resources and the prosperity they create. However, the Liberal Bill C-5 would marginally improve our ability to move projects forward, and yes, Conservatives will support any measure, no matter how small, if it would help one single project break ground.

So far, Bill C-5 is largely a symbolic move to make minor improvements to interprovincial trade and regulatory clarity. It would provide clearer or more streamlined regulatory guidance for designated resources and infrastructure projects, but the Prime Minister will need to do more to free his dream projects from the existing laws he helped create to choke development. With Bill C-5, the overall environment for free market private sector development remains restrictive.

Meanwhile, it was Conservatives who put forward the only credible plan to reignite energy investment in Canada. Canadians need to know that we are still committed to our plan: to repeal Liberal anti-development laws and regulations that have cost them half a trillion dollars in lost investment over the last lost decade; to build a national energy corridor to rapidly approve and build critical infrastructure and end our dependence on the Americans; to create one-and-done approvals to accelerate priority resource projects through one application and environmental review; to scrap the industrial carbon tax; and to lower costs for Canadians while boosting our economy and allowing our companies to become competitive again with the U.S. We would repeal Bill C-69 and the west coast tanker ban to build the infrastructure needed to export our clean, responsible energy overseas.

The Prime Minister is known to have a fondness for Conservative ideas, although he has watered each one down, with a minuscule tax cut, a very confined GST break and a sleight-of-hand huge increase in carbon tax measures. For the sake of our country, those who go to work every day to power Canada and the world and those who desperately want to do so, I implore the Liberal government to continue to follow our lead. If not, we are on the doorstep.

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from 2015 to 2023, global oil and gas production grew 5%. Over the same time period, Canadian oil and gas production grew 29%. Of course, we

welcome constructive suggestions for improvement, and we will be working with partners, provinces and proponents because better is always possible, but a total retreat from that which made development possible and markets accessible is not better.

Demand for Canadian oil and gas grows because we develop our resources to high environmental and social standards, with indigenous partners and with an eye toward a robust, sustainable industry. Canada is at a pivotal moment, and we are taking a historically important step to establish ourselves as an energy superpower. That is why the government has introduced the one Canadian economy act: to remove federal barriers to internal trade and labour mobility and to advance projects of national interest.

We expect that if the one Canadian economy act passes in the next few days, it will reassure investors that Canada and our energy sector are open for business. I am pleased to say that the voting record on the one Canadian economy act so far shows that the official opposition supports our work to lead the world in energy production and transmission.

The government's vision is clear. We are focused on expanding our global energy reach beyond those who share our borders to those who share our values. Canadian conventional energy, LNG and hydrogen produced to the highest environmental and labour standards can displace more-polluting sources abroad, reduce global emissions and enhance energy security for our allies. While this work is being done, our government will keep investing in carbon capture, methane reduction and other technologies that help bring down emissions in the conventional energy sector.

I would also like to point out the TMX project. A Liberal government invested in TMX to expand the access to Canada's conventional energy producers so they have global market access. Greater access to international markets has improved the overall value of Canadian oil, generating significant benefits for the entire country.

We will also support clean energy and protect the environment because it is the right thing to do. It is a strong Canadian value. We will get more energy to market while fighting climate change through strategic investments in carbon capture, methane reduction and clean technologies.

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As the Prime Minister has said before, the government will get projects built. Of course, we will work with provinces, private sector proponents and indigenous communities. Indigenous rights will not be an afterthought; they are the bedrock of our nation. The protections in section 35 are enshrined in our Constitution, and the government stands steadfastly in support of them and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We need to work together.

We are focused on growing our economy, carrying out our duty to our partners and supporting our energy producers. We must focus on delivery. The government will build more, build faster and build with confidence, confidence that will provide certainty to investors and confidence that will give Canadians a better, more prosperous future.

• (1845)

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, it is pretty clear to me that our effectiveness on this side of the floor has been significant.

On resource development, the Prime Minister made a revealing admission: He acknowledged that his government's own laws made it nearly impossible to build anything, and his solution is to give political exemptions to a few hand-picked projects. However, here is our question: If Liberals admit the laws do not work, why not repeal them altogether?

That is why Conservatives are calling for a true national sovereignty law, one that would repeal the disastrous Bill C-69, lift the tanker ban, scrap the energy cap and the job-killing industrial carbon tax, unlock our potential with shovel-ready zones, and provide clear permitting paths for mines, dams, nuclear plants, LNG facilities, pipelines and more. For the sake of our youth, we cannot wait.

We want a Canada that is self-reliant, sovereign and independent, and where workers take home powerful paycheques. What the member is saying on the other side of the floor reflects this side of the floor, and it is time to see the government actually do it.

Corey Hogan: Once again, Mr. Speaker, we saw 29% growth in industry from 2015 to 2023, compared to a global average of 5%. An agenda that includes social and environmental protections is pro-development.

The government is focused on rapidly advancing major projects so potential projects that meet all requirements can be approved faster, shortening five-year approval timelines to two years. It is part of a broader effort, highlighted in the Prime Minister's mandate letter, that supports more infrastructure built "at speeds not seen in generations." The major projects of national interest and the one Canadian economy act are going to be essential to growing Canada's economy and creating good-paying jobs. We will expand and diversify trade, invest in infrastructure like ports, roads, trade corridors and railways and responsibly develop our energy and natural resources.

Our government will increase Canada's resilience, security and prosperity for Canadians today and for future generations.

HOUSING

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised to sell surplus government properties in order to build 4,000 housing units by 2028, but a scathing report from the Auditor General showed that, after five years, they had built only 309 of those units and are on pace to build only about 12% of the 4,000 they promised. This is of particular concern now because Canadians are facing a housing crisis, and the Liberal government, according to the Auditor General, is sitting on 5.9 million square feet of space that could be utilized for housing development. We see this right across the country, but certainly in northwestern Ontario. We are feeling that significant effect of the housing shortage.

I have heard from many people across our region who are struggling to find a place to live, as well as many who cannot afford their first and last month's rent to even get into a new place. I have heard from some constituents, who have reached out to me indicating that they have to move out of the place they are currently living in but cannot afford or find something suitable for them to move into and are actually facing homelessness.

I would also note that there is a great economic cost to this housing crisis. Many employers in my district are struggling to find workers nearby. They are looking for people to move in from around the country and, frankly, around the world, but that is not able to happen, because people cannot find places to live to be able to work in northwestern Ontario. It has come to the point now that businesses and other organizations are actually purchasing housing themselves in order to be able to house their employees and make that part of the package when making a job offer.

As well, more broadly, we know that nearly half of Canadians are very concerned about housing affordability because of the rising costs of housing and rent, and nearly 60% of Canadians aged 20 to 35 have been reported to be experiencing housing affordability challenges. Just today, in fact, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation released new estimates on Canada's housing supply gaps, and it estimates, in the government's own words, that returning to the housing affordability levels of 2019 would require the government to build between 430,000 and 480,000 new housing units over the next decade. This is not even going back to 2015, but just to 2019. This means that Canada needs to double the number of homes it builds each year to restore that affordability level. That is a big goal. We have seen reports from the TD Bank indicating that housing starts are actually going to decline, and so we are on the wrong track.

I would add that the Conservatives have put forward a plan. We did so in the last Parliament, over the election campaign, and we still have the plan, which is truly the only real plan to get housing built. We have seen nothing from the government but platitudes. It will not even bring forward a budget that includes a plan for housing. Conservatives are calling for the government to prioritize a plan to build 2.3 million new homes over the next five years by axing the GST on new homes; incentivizing municipalities to cut red tape and development taxes; and, of course, to the root of my question, selling federal properties to developers who will be able to help build more affordable housing more quickly.

When will the Liberals finally keep the promise they made to Canadians so that they can free up that housing development and get more homes built across the country?

• (1850)

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and his speech. As I said earlier, we agree that Canada is experiencing a housing crisis.

That is why the Government of Canada has developed the most ambitious housing plan ever. We pledged to double the rate of home construction to nearly 500,000 homes per year. We are taking decisive action to cut red tape, stimulate private investment and lower the cost of homebuilding.

We are building on successes and making historic investments in new housing construction. Through the national housing strategy, we have reduced or eliminated housing needs for more than 660,000 households, and we will support the creation of more than 166,000 new homes. We also launched the housing design catalogue, which includes 50 standardized housing designs to help builders reduce construction costs and simplify the process.

We are taking concrete action. We know that increasing supply will lower the cost of housing. That is why we continue to incentivize municipalities to remove barriers to construction with programs like the housing accelerator fund. To date, we have signed agreements with more than 200 communities across the country that have committed to reducing red tape and simplifying the development process. In my riding of Trois-Rivières, dozens of units have been built in the past 18 months, giving real families real homes, so the plan is working.

We are also committed to taking action to protect the supply of rental housing. We have eliminated the GST on new rental construction. We have committed more than \$23 billion in loans to support the construction of more than 59,000 homes through the apartment construction loan program. We are in the process of creating “build Canada homes”. This new agency will bring together the appropriate financing and public-private partnerships to leverage public land, remove financial barriers and increase our supply of truly affordable housing for low- and middle-income Canadians. We are taking action where it is needed most.

We will also help develop the modular and prefab housing industry and create new careers and well-paying jobs in the skilled trades. As I said earlier, we will build a resilient housing industry

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using Canadian innovation, Canadian labour and Canadian softwood lumber. It is unconscionable that anyone in Canada does not have access to safe, affordable and inclusive housing. That is why the federal government is committed to solving the housing crisis and showing leadership when it comes to housing.

Team Canada, our team, is fully committed. We are working with home builders, the private sector, all levels of government and indigenous leaders to use every tool and every resource at our disposal. We are focused on creating a housing market that works for everyone and building Canada strong. That is what we were elected to do, and that is what we are going to do.

• (1855)

[English]

Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have finally admitted there is a housing crisis, and that is a good thing, but in the very same comments, they articulate that they believe their plan is working. They have been in government for the last 10 years, and it is because of their plan that we face this housing crisis across the country today.

I will remind members that when Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre was housing minister, Conservatives built nearly 200,000 homes and the average rent was \$973 for a one-bedroom apartment. Since then, housing costs have doubled, and Canadians are struggling to afford a home, as the Liberals have rightly pointed out. My question was very specific to the Liberals' promise to build 4,000 housing units by 2028 using surplus government properties. They are only on track to meet 12% of the promised 4,000 units.

Can the parliamentary secretary tell us when the government is going to keep its promise to get more homes to the market?

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, as usual, my colleagues keep focusing on just a few parts of the Auditor General's report to cause a media stir.

The Government of Canada has committed to doubling the pace of housing construction over the next decade to 500,000 housing units a year. I invite my colleagues to reread the Auditor General's report properly, in its entirety.

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To meet the needs of a growing Canada, we must increase the housing supply in every category, namely market housing, social housing and affordable housing. We have to build quickly, at scale, and reduce costs for builders. We are working with the municipalities to cut development charges in half for all multi-unit housing projects. What is more, we are encouraging municipalities to remove barriers to development through the housing accelerator fund. As I mentioned, we are launching the “build Canada homes” initiative to speed up construction—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:59 p.m.)

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