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Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[Translation]

COMMISSIONER OF LOBBYING

The Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to subsection 94(2) of the Access to Information Act and subsection 72(2) of the Privacy Act, to lay upon the table the reports of the Commissioner of Lobbying on the administration of these acts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

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

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[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the three following reports from the Standing Committee on International Trade: the first report, in relation to the motion adopted on Monday, June 16, entitled “Measures Relating to the Canadian Border Services Agency’s Assessment and Revenue Management (CARM) System”; the second report, entitled “Selected United States and European Union Trade-Related Measures: Some Impacts on Canada’s Fishing Sector”; and the third report, entitled “Canada’s Supply Chains and Expanded International Trade: Challenges and Measures”.

[Translation]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans entitled “Challenges to the Sustainability of the Yukon Salmon Stocks”.

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

[English]

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as vice-chair of the fisheries committee, FOPO, I would like to point out that, as stated in this report, there has been mismanagement of the Yukon River salmon stocks. The result is that indigenous and non-indigenous harvesters can no longer harvest. This affects the livelihoods in communities and food security. The government has failed to deliver on the diplomacy needed to comanage with U.S. partners, and Canadians are suffering because of this.

* * *

SERGEI MAGNITSKY INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-219, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), the Special Economic Measures Act and the Broadcasting Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to table this bill. I want to thank the member for Northumberland—Clarke for seconding the bill. In the last Parliament, he introduced the international human rights act, Bill C-281.

Despite the long title just read, the bill has a short title, the Sergei Magnitsky international anti-corruption and human rights act. Sergei Magnitsky, to remind everybody in the House, was a Russian freedom fighter who stood up against corruption. He stood up against the dictator Vladimir Putin and tried to expose how kleptocrats were embezzling millions and millions of dollars from private investors. Magnitsky was tortured in prison and died of his injuries. He was murdered by those kleptocrats in 2009. The person he was working for, Bill Browder, is actually here in Ottawa today to help launch this private member's bill.

We have to remember that gross human rights violators always start off as corrupt officials who enrich themselves. This type of kleptocracy has to end. That is why we are encouraging the government, in the bill, to continue on, to establish with our allies the international anti-corruption court at The Hague.

Routine Proceedings

In the bill, we would do a number of things to strengthen our sanctions regime. One is to require the Minister of Foreign Affairs to report to the House on an annual basis what steps the government is taking to fight and advance human rights internationally and to include the names and the status of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience across the world. We would also amend, as the Speaker mentioned, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Sergei Magnitsky Law, which I introduced in the chamber and which was passed in the House and the chamber with Senator Raynell Andreychuk at the time, back in 2018.

As well, Bill C-219 would change SEMA to define transnational repression and sanction foreign nationals who do it right here in Canada against Canadian citizens and permanent residents. We would immediately ban immediate family members of those who are put on the sanctions list from travel in Canada. We would make sure that the government must table in Parliament, every time it adds somebody to the sanctions list, who they are and what foreign nationals and entities they are. We would ask the RCMP and FINTRAC to report back to the minister on how they are going to enforce and regulate the sanctions regime and administrate that. We would allow parliamentary committees to actually make recommendations to the minister on who should be added to the sanctions list; the minister would have to report in 30 days on whether they will add them.

Finally, Bill C-219 would amend the Broadcasting Act to revoke licences for broadcasting companies and media companies from around the world that are from regimes that either the House or the Senate has recognized as committing genocide, or that have been already sanctioned by the government through the economic sanctions regime that we have, to ensure that they are not using our broadcast airwaves.

We would also change the name of SEMA to the “Sergei Magnitsky global sanctions act”. This would make sure that when we are sanctioning in Parliament or by the government, we are consistent with our allies and that whenever we stand up for human rights, it is synonymous with Sergei Magnitsky. With the passing of the legislation, I would look forward to working with all colleagues to prevent Canada from being a safe haven for gross human rights violators and corrupt foreign officials.

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

• (1010)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I was being very respectful in terms of the length of time that the member spoke in introducing his bill. However, members should be reminded that in introducing a private member's bill, the speech should be relatively short, concise and to the point.

The Speaker: That is noted, and I hope it is noted by all members of the House.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions amongst the parties and if you

seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, at the conclusion of Oral Questions on Wednesday, September 17, 2025:

(a) the House observe a moment of silence for the late Honourable Ken Dryden, that afterwards, a member of each of the recognized parties, a member of the New Democratic Party, and a member of the Green Party, each be permitted to make a statement for no more than five minutes to pay tribute;

(b) the House observe a moment of silence for the late Honourable John McCallum, that afterwards, a member of each of the recognized parties, a member of the New Democratic Party, and a member of the Green Party, each be permitted to make a statement for no more than five minutes to pay tribute;

(c) the House observe a moment of silence for the late Honourable Gail Shea, that afterwards, a member of the Conservative Party, a member of each of the other recognized parties, a member of the New Democratic Party, and a member of the Green Party each be permitted to make a statement for not more than five minutes to pay tribute; and

(d) the time taken for these proceedings shall be added to the time provided for Government Orders.

[Translation]

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member 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)

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise for the 60th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, presenting petitions on the alarming increase of violent crime, which threatens safety and well-being across the region. The petitioners are seeking a resolution to the devastating impacts of the soft-on-crime policies that the Liberals have enacted, such as Bill C-5 and Bill C-75.

Bill C-5 repealed mandatory jail time for serious gun crimes, and Bill C-75 forces judges to apply a principle of restraint, releasing repeat violent offenders right back onto our streets. The petitioners are concerned that since 2015, violent crime has increased by 55% and firearm crime is up 130%. They want to see an end to the Liberals' catch-and-release policies, which are devastating their community.

This is why the people of Swan River are demanding jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders. I support the good people of Swan River.

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPIES

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise on behalf of constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford to table a petition regarding nicotine pouches. The Government of Canada has banned the sale of nicotine pouches from convenience stores, from gas stations and online, and it will allow pharmacies to sell the product only behind the counter. Small businesses, including convenience stores, have a proven track record of responsibly selling age-restricted products, including nicotine pouches.

The petitioners are asking for the government to repeal this over-burdensome regulation and to keep the process and sale of these products as they were before.

GAZA

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition from Canadians deeply concerned about the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza. The petitioners note that, under common article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, Canada must respect international humanitarian law. They highlight that article 59 of the fourth Geneva Convention requires occupying powers to allow impartial humanitarian relief and that Canada's international assistance accountability act mandates that our aid uphold human rights to international legal standards. The petitioners state that Israel's current policies violate these obligations.

The petitioners therefore call on the Government of Canada to reject militarized aid models, restore access for UN agencies and NGOs such as UNRWA and the World Food Programme, permit safe entry for Canadian health care and humanitarian workers and ensure that all Canadian aid is delivered through internationally recognized, neutral and independent channels.

• (1015)

HEALTH CARE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to take the floor on an issue of concern. In every one of the community meetings I held since we last met in this place in June, I heard from constituents desperately concerned about the lack of primary health care providers and family doctors, and I know that while this is of particular concern in Saanich—Gulf Islands, it is a concern everywhere.

The petitioners call for the federal government, the House of Commons, to work with all provinces and territories to come up with a full and fair solution to Canada's family doctor shortage, premised on the importance of the Canada Health Act, that is universal and single-payer.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of Canadians alarmed by the House of Commons finance committee's recommendations in its pre-budget report: recommendation 429, which proposes revoking the charitable status of pro-life organizations; and recommendation 430, which proposes removing “advancement of religion” as a recognized charitable purpose under the Income Tax Act.

I have received from houses of worship across this country so much concern, reflected in this petition, that these recommenda-

Routine Proceedings

tions are fundamentally anti-free speech and anti-religious freedom. The petitioners, and I on their behalf, advocate for the complete protection of charitable status regardless of these ideological litmus tests.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on the charitable status of religious organizations and those that are pro-life, and on the Liberal and NDP proposal to revoke that charitable status.

Petitioners lament that some members opposite are so blinded by their animus towards charitable organizations that they would seek to undermine the good works that these groups do for the most vulnerable Canadians. Moreover, petitioners lament that members opposite seem not to care for the fundamental freedoms protected in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms: the freedoms of belief and religion. Therefore, the petitioners call on the government and all parliamentarians to fundamentally reject these recommendations to revoke charitable status, to not include them in the upcoming budget and to strongly affirm the value of these charitable organizations to Canadians across the country.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I delayed standing up because I know other members have petitions as well, and I have more than one to table today.

First of all, I would like to begin by tabling another petition similar to that tabled by colleagues in response to this very concerning recommendation from the Liberal-dominated finance committee in the previous Parliament.

Notwithstanding his protestations, the member for Winnipeg North can observe in this report, as petitioners say, recommendations 429 and 430. Recommendation 429 proposes applying a political values test to charitable status determination and revoking the charitable status of organizations that take a position on abortion that is different from that taken by the government. Recommendation 430 of that same report, endorsed by the Liberal-dominated committee, calls for the removal of “advancement of religion” as a charitable tax purpose. That would effectively strip charitable status from all houses of worship, regardless of religion.

Petitioners further note that stripping charitable status from these organizations would result in a revocation tax, which would force them to hand over all of their property. That is an extremely draconian proposal from the Liberal-dominated finance committee.

Routine Proceedings

Petitioners note that religious charities in Canada provide vital services for society, including food banks, care for seniors, newcomer support, youth programs and mental health outreach, all of which is rooted in their faith tradition, and that singling out or excluding faith charities from the charitable sector based on religious belief undermines the diversity and pluralism foundational to Canadian society.

Petitioners ask the government to reject these recommendations and refrain from including them in the next federal budget, which we will see eventually, I suppose, and to affirm the charitable status of faith-based organizations whose work flows from sincerely held beliefs and whose contributions serve the common good in Canada.

• (1020)

LEBANON

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): The second petition is in support of the people of Lebanon.

Petitioners note that the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah that started on October 8, 2023, has had terrible consequences for the Lebanese people. They further note that Hezbollah is a terrorist Iranian regime proxy that acts to serve the regime's ideology against the interests of the people of Lebanon. The people of Lebanon want a complete end to colonial oppression by the Iranian regime.

Petitioners, therefore, call on the government to seek the complete disarmament of Hezbollah, the end of Iranian aid to Hezbollah and the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty with all of its territories governed by an elected sovereign Lebanese government.

I do note that significant progress has been made toward this end since the collection of signatures for this petition. While there has been ongoing work to secure Lebanon from the influence of this terrorist organization, I feel that, notwithstanding some of the change in circumstances, it is still important to table that petition.

SENATE REFORM

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to propose a petition brought to me by constituents that deals with Senate reform. Petitioners are concerned about unequal representation in the Senate. In particular, they are concerned about the fact that there are some provinces in this country with lower populations that have more representation in the Senate relative to provinces such as mine, which have a much lower number of senators than their population would suggest they should. This is obviously an artifact of a certain history, but we should move forward and affirm a concept of Canada where regions are treated equally and not facing discrimination on the basis of historical circumstances.

Petitioners in this case are proposing the establishment of equal representation for each province in the Senate. I look forward to hearing the government's response to that proposal.

The Speaker: How many petitions does the member have?

Garnett Genuis: I have four more, but I'm happy to end earlier.

The Speaker: The member can go ahead, but succinctly, please.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, my succinctness is one of my best qualities, as members of office have said.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member.

The hon. member for Shefford is rising on a point of order.

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, the interpretation cut out, but it magically came back just as I rose, so everything is fine now.

The Speaker: The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan may continue.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I do not know how to say “succinct” in French.

An hon. member: The French word is “succinct”.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, my ability to be succinct is my best quality.

• (1025)

[English]

PORNOGRAPHY

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Next, I would like to table a petition in support of Bill S-210. The petitioners say that was the number of the bill in the last Parliament, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act. It is now Bill S-209 in this Parliament.

The petitioners note that sexually explicit material, including demeaning and violent material, can be easily accessed on the Internet by young persons. A significant portion of that material is made available on the Internet for commercial purposes and is not protected by age verification. Parliament recognizes the harmful effects of the increasing accessibility of sexually explicit materials online for young persons. Further, the petitioners note that online age verification technology is increasingly sophisticated and can now effectively ascertain the age of users without any breach of privacy.

The petitioners, therefore, want to see reasonable age verification requirements that protect privacy so that young children are no longer able to access sexual material online. That is why they are calling on the House to support what is, in this Parliament, Bill S-209, which was Bill S-210 in the previous Parliament.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling deals with the issue of euthanasia or medical assistance in dying. Petitioners are concerned, in particular, about what has come to be known as track 2 euthanasia and how this has led to significant problems for Canadians living with disabilities. In fact, these expansions have been vocally opposed by every single major organization representing Canadians with disabilities.

The petitioners note that allowing medical assistance in dying for those with disabilities or chronic illnesses who are not dying devalues their lives, tacitly endorsing the notion that life with disability is optional and, by extension, disposable. They warn about the risks of having an ableist health care system, where the lives of those with disabilities are not seen as worth living.

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

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Next, Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition, and I am not sure who prepared it, in which petitioners say that Canada made us all a promise: that anyone from anywhere could do anything. They say that after 10 years of the Liberal government, the promise of Canada has been broken. There have been a lot of broken promises: to balance the budget, to reduce taxes, to make more affordable housing, etc. The petitioners say that hard-working young, 35-year-old Canadians are now living in their parents' basements. This never happened before. It is the response to a situation where housing costs have doubled.

Petitioners note, further, that gun violence is up 120%, and that the government has gone after hunters instead of criminals and gun smugglers.

The petitioners say that it is time to bring home powerful paycheques and that, for this to happen, people need a roof over their heads. Currently, Canada has fewer homes per capita than any other country in the G7. The petitioners say we need to incentivize municipalities to speed up building permits, cut building taxes, free up land for building—

The Speaker: I would note for the hon. member that there are 30 seconds left in the petition segment of Routine Proceedings.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot in this petition, but I will wrap up in the time that is available.

The petitioners note that we need a rule where one dollar of savings is found for every new dollar of government spending. This is how parents, seniors and small businesses balance their budgets, and they would expect the same common sense from their leaders.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

STRONG BORDERS ACT

The House resumed from June 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know members were disappointed that I had to wrap up during the previous rubric, so they can hear another 10 minutes.

It is great to be back in the new Parliament. Parliament has not been the most active this year. We had prorogation then an election, and the government briefly came back for a spring session. Our position as Conservatives was that we should be prepared to work at least at the committee level over the summer, but Liberals loved not working and wanted to further extend that through the summer. Hopefully we will actually be able to get down to the nation's business in an effective way in the current Parliament.

Conservatives are eager to get to work. We are calling for action on the critical challenges that are confronting Canadians, which is why before Parliament even came back, our leader sent a letter to the Prime Minister, articulating four critical priorities for the current Parliament, things that we need to tackle. These are crises that were in many ways caused by policies of the Liberal government and that we hope to see change and reversal on.

We will certainly be doing everything we can to push for results in these areas. We will oppose the things that are wrong about the government's agenda. We will support legislation and policy change that reverse the failures of the last 10 years that have brought us to this point.

In particular, the four priorities we articulated were addressing, first, the Liberal job loss crisis, the catastrophic levels of unemployment, particularly affecting young people, which result from Liberal policy failures. Confronting that will be a critical priority for us in the current Parliament.

Second is addressing the cost of living crisis. There are so many Canadians who are struggling to afford homes and to afford basic essentials. The Prime Minister has said that he would be judged by the price of groceries, yet we continue to see escalation in costs at the grocery store, for those people buying homes, in transportation and in so many other areas.

There is the job loss crisis and the cost of living crisis. There is the immigration crisis, the failure of the government to align our immigration system with the economic interests of this country. This has led to all kinds of problems. I think there is a lot of concern from Canadians on that issue as well.

Government Orders

Fourth, speaking to the particulars of the bill before us, there are particulars I do not think are addressed fully by the bill, and it incorporates some other problems and distractions. However, the fourth issue we are tackling in the current Parliament in particular is the crime crisis. On the crime issue, it is more difficult for the Liberals to muddy the waters by blaming other factors.

When it comes to economic issues, they often say that there are all these other things going on around the world that are causing them. In many cases, we can demonstrate how that is not true in fact. It is hard to blame events outside the country for the fact that we are building fewer homes in Canada than we did in the past. It is hard to blame events outside the country for the fact that unemployment has actually been steadily going up for the last three years. We are reaching catastrophic levels, especially for youth unemployment, but this is a trend that has been escalating ever since we came out of the COVID period.

It is hard for the government, even on economic issues, to perpetuate the continuing charade of blaming external events, but in particular as it relates to crime. I would encourage people to look at the data, in particular for violent crime. We can see, if plotting on a graph the years and rates of violent crime in this country, that violent crime was going down, and then something happened in 2015.

A new government, a Liberal government, came in in 2015. We are now in the fourth term of that government. It had a different approach with respect to criminal justice. Violent crime rates were going down, and then violent crime rates started going up. Crime rates started going up in particular in response to policy changes that the government made around bail, sentencing and, I think, some changes in the way it approached the issue of crime more broadly.

● (1030)

There was a downward trend and then an upward trend. What we need to see is the reversal of those bad Liberal policies and the return to an approach that we took when crime was actually going down. I know we have put forward various constructive announcements and proposals around reversing the Liberal crime trajectory.

There is a bill before us today, Bill C-2, that purports to be about these kinds of issues. Unfortunately, the Liberals are sort of stepping on their own agenda in lots of ways, because they are weaving in, into some provisions that are supportable, some provisions that we are concerned about and I think that many Canadians are concerned about as well. The Liberals do this a lot; they want to have a nice-sounding announcement about a bill, but they do not actually do the things they say they are going to do, and they weave in other aspects of a different agenda.

Let me highlight some of the things that are in the bill that I think make a lot of Canadians wonder, “Why is that there, and what is the government trying to do with this here?” The bill includes a provision that would limit the use of cash. A lot of us probably use cash a lot less than our grandparents did, because of changes in technology, but on the other hand, cash use does remain a legitimate and vital part of our economy. I think it is something that tends to be relied on more by seniors and by people in rural areas. There are situations where the use of cash is more practical.

We have talked a bit, in the context of the unemployment problems, about what our first jobs were and about the importance of a first job. One of my first jobs was working at, believe it or not, the travelling fair. I worked at the Calgary Stampede and the Edmonton Fair.

Sukhman Gill: You were a roadie.

Garnett Genuis: I was not a roadie; I was a carny. I think that is the technical term, to correct the member for Abbotsford—South Langley.

Kevin Lamoureux: That explains a lot.

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I even went to the Red River Ex a few times and had a lot of fun there. The point is, if someone is running a small business, say a carnival game, they are going to have a lot of people paying individually in cash, and that is going to add up to a lot of cash by the end of the day. With the government putting constraints around the use of cash, we can note the impact it may have on small businesses, on different kinds of retail businesses, the challenges it may create and its impact on seniors, on rural communities and these sorts of things. Therefore we have concerns about the changes the government would be making with regard to the use of cash.

More fundamentally, the Liberals are obstructing and stepping on their own agenda by weaving into the bill provisions that make a lot of Canadians wonder why they are there. There are some additional concerns the bill raises around civil liberties. The Liberals have woven in provisions that involve, for instance, the abilities to open mail without oversight and to compel Internet companies to hand over private information. There are additional provisions around warrantless searches.

The Liberal government does not have a great track record when it comes to protecting Canadians' data. It does not have a great track record when it comes to understanding and respecting the privacy, the rights or the civil liberties of Canadians. However, a government that has done so badly in these areas is asking for more powers in the area of opening mail without oversight and compelling the transfer of private information, and also in the area of warrantless searches. These and the issues around cash that I raised address other concerns about what the government is really driving at with the bill.

What we really need to see is fundamental reforms to our criminal justice system that get us back to a time when crime was going down. Crime was going down before the Liberals took office; it has gone up since they took office. We need to ask why that has happened, and we need a reversal of approach.

• (1035)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very confused as to what the member opposite was trying to convey, because it sounds like, in theory, for the last four years I have been here, he has been talking about having a bill like the one that is before us. What exactly is he suggesting we can work on in committee to move it forward collaboratively? Canadian voters want us to have a bill for borders, as well as to work in co-operation with the whole House to make sure we can pass good and sensible bills.

What exactly is the member trying to shift and change in the bill? He spent four years talking about it. Now we have a bill, and he is complaining. What is he complaining about?

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am happy to repeat what I just said. We have concerns about the provisions in the bill around use of cash and the limiting of that. We have concerns about the restrictions on civil liberties. We have actually been asking for changes to sentencing, to parole and to bail. Those changes are not in the bill. The changes we have said are critically needed when it comes to criminal justice are not in the bill.

The Liberals have instead put forward a bill that has some supportable provisions but that weaves in some areas, some concepts, that are clearly of concern. I am sorry if it was necessary to repeat that, but hopefully it is clear to the member now the provisions we are talking about that are issues, like use of cash, as well as restrictions on civil liberties.

• (1040)

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, welcome back to the House.

I listened to my colleague talk about Bill C-2, but there is an elephant in the room when it comes to this bill. People are reluctant to talk about it, but it is one of the reasons why we in the Bloc Québécois are inclined to be in favour of this bill.

The number of asylum seekers at the border is skyrocketing. While much of this explosion in asylum claims is attributable to international events, some of it is due to irregular crossings. We believe that treating these people properly is important, but so is ensuring a fair distribution of asylum seekers across the country.

We know that, unfortunately, Quebec is still receiving the greatest share. In fact, Quebec takes in nearly 50% of the asylum seekers who come to Canada. Figures for the other provinces indicate that they are not doing their part. Not long ago, an ad in *Le Journal de Montréal* condemned this situation, and I was surprised to see that it caused something of a scandal. After all, the real scandal is that the other provinces are not pulling their weight.

Why must Quebec bear such a heavy burden? What are my colleague's thoughts on the unequal distribution of asylum seekers? Why are the other provinces not taking in more of them?

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. I think it is important to discuss the issues plaguing the asylum seeker system.

Government Orders

We need to recognize that the overall immigration system been broken by the Liberals. Asylum seekers now have to wait a long time for their applications to be assessed. The solution is to implement an efficient system where asylum claims are assessed very quickly and fairly. It would be good for both Canada and asylum seekers to have clarity on each case and to put an end to the wait for a decision.

[English]

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

I just want to reflect on a question my colleague from the Liberals just asked about the fact that Conservatives have been asking for this type of thing for four years. The reality is, in my view, that Conservatives have been asking for changes to bail, changes to sentencing, changes to how we deal with fentanyl and changes to how we deal with firearms.

Is there anything here the member can point to as to why it took so long and what is really missing here?

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, my colleague is the shadow minister for our party on this issue and is doing excellent work advocating for public safety.

There are some weird things, unrelated to the objective, woven into the bill, but also many of the things we have been asking for that are needed are missing. The government should take its cue from what we have put forward, like bail reform legislation and other proposals that would actually confront the problems in an effective way.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be back in the House representing the good people of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill. After a long summer away, I confess that I have mixed feelings about that. I am happy to be back, but at the same time, this is the 22nd day this year that we are sitting in the House. I think that Canadians would have expected us to work through the summer rather than be home. Even though it is always a pleasure to engage with our constituents, we are elected to do a job for Canadians. It would have been so much better had we been here in the House, or at least in committees, working through the summer. The Liberals, of course, felt otherwise.

While I enjoyed my time in my riding this summer, I was disheartened to constantly hear from so many people in our community that they feel unsafe. After 10 years of the very tired Liberal government, people do not feel comfortable walking to school. They are unsafe taking public transit. They do not feel safe in their own homes. This is due to a wave of violent crime that has swept through communities throughout our country, particularly in urban areas, such as the one I represent in Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

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Due to the Liberal government's catch-and-release policies, repeat offenders continue to be released back into communities, where they can terrorize the communities again and perpetrate even more crimes, which are in many cases crimes similar to, or the same as, the ones they had been arrested for. Since the Liberals took office, soft-on-crime policies have caused crime rates to skyrocket. Violent crime is up 50%. Homicides are up 28%. Extortion is up a staggering 350%. Auto thefts are up 46%. Human trafficking is up 84%. Worst of all, total sexual violations against children are up 119%.

We cannot forget that behind each of these statistics are real people who have suffered and who are continuing to suffer, who are frightened and who continue to be frightened. Two people, including an 11-year-old girl, lost their lives, killed, as a result of an arson, a deliberate arson, in the place they should have felt safest, their own home. This was in my community, where I live, in Richmond Hill.

A man in Vaughan, as we heard yesterday in the House, from my very learned and exceptional colleague from King—Vaughan, was killed during a home invasion. A criminal walked in. This thug put a gun to his daughter's head. Naturally, a father would react. Upon his reaction to protect his little girl, he was shot dead in front of his family, leaving the children to grow up without their father.

In Niagara, and this is very sickening, Daniel Senecal was charged with breaking and entering, aggravated assault and sexual interference of a three-year-old girl. The child suffered serious injuries and had to be rushed to an out-of-region hospital for advanced care. Senecal also requested to be transferred to a women's prison.

The justice minister tweeted, just a few weeks ago, "This isn't the Wild West." My constituents have told me that they feel it is far worse than the Wild West. It certainly feels like it is because these criminals are free to reoffend at will. They get caught one day, and police services across the country are telling us that they are frustrated because they are then released the next day. The minister, like the Liberal government, is once again out of touch with the everyday struggles facing my constituents and, indeed, all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Bill C-2 fails to bring bail reform that would end catch-and-release policies. It fails to implement mandatory prison sentences for fentanyl traffickers, who kill thousands. In fact, more people have died from opioid and fentanyl overdoses in this country than were killed in the Second World War, which is a staggering statistic. The bill fails to bring in new mandatory prison time for gangsters who commit crimes with guns and wreak havoc on our streets, which are rampant and everywhere. It would fail to eliminate house arrest for some of the most serious offences, allowing those who brutalize our communities to serve their sentences from the comfort of their own homes. I am deeply concerned that this bill does not go far enough to fight crime and bring safety back to our communities.

• (1045)

The bill would allow for new powers, such as opening mail, without oversight, based just on suspicion. It would compel Internet companies to hand over private information, allow for warrantless searches and eliminate the use of cash. That does not make sense.

Cash has been legal tender in Canada since the inception of cash in this country. As we heard from the previous speaker, many communities, such as people in the north, seniors and so forth, do not have a credit card system. Some of them do not have Internet to transact their business online. Cash is very important. This bill would limit the use of cash.

The bill raises serious concerns about privacy, surveillance and civil liberties. I would argue, as would many Canadians, that judicial and parliamentary oversight are fundamental principles of our democracy. They need to be there. We cannot give arbitrary powers without having the proper oversight to ensure that there is fairness in the system. The bill would expand lawful access powers, allowing police, security agencies and others to demand information from various service providers, including hotels, banks, doctors and more, to release private information without judicial authorization. That is a direct infringement on the privacy of Canadians.

The bill has a low threshold to compel providers to provide subscriber information, account details and, in many instances, the time-stamp, location of service and other information that is normally considered private. Bill C-2 would give the minister and/or cabinet new powers to act unilaterally, without parliamentary or judicial oversight, based just on suspicion. Nebulous criteria and vagueness leave room for interpretation. They leave room for arbitrary decisions and possible discriminatory decision-making.

We have checks and balances in our democracy. This bill would take away a lot of those checks and balances. Conservatives have always fought for practical policies that would secure our borders and bring back safety to our communities while upholding Canadian rights.

It is not surprising that this tired Liberal government is bringing in a bill called the strong borders act. What is surprising is that the Liberals have been in power for 10 years and they have now decided, 10 years later, that we should have stronger borders and to put it in a bill. We would think that this would have been a priority from day one, but now, somehow, they want us to believe that the sweeping powers in this new bill are going to fix the problem and that we should listen to them because they know what needs to be done. In fact, a lot of the things in the bill that are supportable are things that we, as Conservatives, have been talking about in the House every day over the past 10 years, to ears on the other side of the House that have not been listening, in the tired Liberal government.

Conservatives support adding thousands of border agents, extending CBSA powers along the entire border, and installing border surveillance towers. We also support installing high-powered scanners at land crossings and shipping ports to spot drugs, guns and stolen cars. Most importantly, we will always support the hard-working men and women on the front lines. They are doing their very best with the limited resources they are given. They play a critical role in keeping Canadians safe by working to stop the flow of drugs and guns into our country, and for that, we should sincerely be very gracious and thankful.

Conservatives also support the government tracking departures, so government officials would know which deportees are in Canada illegally. Over the last 10 years, the Liberal government has broken our once proud immigration system and turned it into something very hollow. Thousands of immigrants entering into an already overburdened system has resulted in the worsening of housing, jobs and so forth.

As I wind down, though I have lots more I could say, I will say this: Only Conservatives will protect Canadians' freedoms and fight for a tough-on-crime approach, so they can live in their homes, feel safe, walk in their communities, take their children to school, go to a theatre and enjoy a peaceful, safe life.

• (1050)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are some contradictions within the member's statements. On the one hand, he wants the government to take action on fentanyl, yet a drug dealer can put fentanyl into a normal envelope and bring it to Canada Post. This legislation would then allow, through a warrant, for that envelope to be opened. I would think that is a positive thing and that the member would support something of that nature, given that he wants more action done on the issue of fentanyl.

The good news is that the member spent the first part of his speech talking about the issue of bail. The Prime Minister has made a commitment, a platform commitment during the election, which is the most democratic aspect that takes place between our sittings. We made a commitment to bring in bail reform. The good news is that we are going to see that bail reform this fall. I wonder if he would be inclined to support that in a co-operative way, as the Conservative voters want more co-operation on the floor of the House of Commons.

• (1055)

Costas Menegakis: Madam Speaker, I am inclined to believe the Liberals are not going to do anything they said they would do because the Prime Minister has been there for the last six months. In that six months, he has made a bunch of promises, none of which have been fulfilled. It was the Prime Minister and the Liberals who decided to prorogue Parliament, to not come back for the summer and to not allow committees to work. In many cases, the committees are not even working this week, the first week back. I do not trust what they say.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will make a brief comment and then ask a question.

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My colleague spoke about border security. I would like to remind everyone that a little over 10 years ago, when I was an assistant, the Conservatives made cuts to border posts. That had an impact on border security.

I, too, did a lot of work on the ground this summer. While people are indeed concerned about security, they are also worried about the cost of living. The vision at the federal level, from both the Liberals and the Conservatives, is focused on centralization. There is a tendency to implement programs, particularly in the areas of homelessness and housing, that are unsuitable for rural communities like the ones in my riding of Shefford, though it does include one major city, Granby. The money is not reaching our communities.

[English]

Costas Menegakis: Madam Speaker, I was here 10 years ago. I was part of the Conservative government. We had an immigration system that was the envy of the world. We had an immigration system that worked. It responded to newcomers coming to the country. It provided the best possibility for positive outcomes for them and their families, while at the same time contributing to the Canadian economy.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government decided to forego a lot of the strategies, policies and controls we had in place, such as the vetting of new people coming to the country. It relaxed them. That has created the tremendous amount of problems we are seeing with crime in our communities, including the crime in the community the hon. member who asked the question is from.

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

I want to build on the intervention by my colleague from Winnipeg North. He talked about a warrant being required. I am going to read this section, which is a proposed amendment to section 41 of the Canada Post Corporation Act. It states, "The Corporation may open any mail if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that". I do not see a warrant requirement there. I have read the charter statement, which says a warrant is required, but I do not see a warrant requirement there. Perhaps that provision is in the proposed amendments to section 40.1, but I do not read it there.

Does the member agree that it does not seem to be present there? If anybody is watching and knows this, I would ask that they contact me. I would love to see why it does not say that a warrant is required, but the government is saying that a warrant would be required. Perhaps I am missing something.

Costas Menegakis: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question and the point my learned colleague has made. Certainly, it is not part of the legislation. The warrant requirement is not there. I happen to believe, as many Canadians believe, that we should not leave the opening of our mail to the discretion of the mailman who has the piece before him.

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Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to start my speech with this: Jesus is Lord.

There has been an outpouring of condolences to the family of Charlie Kirk, and I would like to give the family of Charlie Kirk my condolences as well. He was a big advocate for the Christian faith and for declaring that Jesus is Lord, and here I do that as well.

The bill we are discussing today, Bill C-2, has a whole section dedicated to how law enforcement deals with the sex offender registry and the sex offender list, and I would like to dedicate most of my time today to discussing that.

I will start by reading what it says on the inside of every Canadian's passport, right on the front page:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada requests, in the name of His Majesty the King, all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer to pass freely, without delay or hindrance, and to afford the bearer such assistance and protection as may be necessary.

This passport is the property of the Government of Canada. It must not be altered. You must take every precaution to safeguard it.

In the front of our passport is an endorsement of the individual bearer of the passport, which is basically saying that Canada is hoping that the countries Canadian people use their passport to travel to will give security and allow their passage, so to speak. We are asking people to welcome Canadians to their country when we offer them a passport.

There are some good things in Bill C-2, particularly in part 13. Under this government, convicted sex offenders or child predators have had more freedom to travel than Canadians who chose not to get vaccinated. Under the Liberal government in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, massive restrictions were placed on people's ability to travel, yet the government continued to issue passports to folks who were on the registered sex offender list.

This is not required or necessary, because in 2015 the Conservative government amended the passport act to give the Minister of Foreign Affairs tools to refuse or cancel passports in order to prevent the commission of sexual offences against a child in Canada or abroad. Basically, it was to stop Canadian sexual predators from travelling and exploiting youth in other parts of the world, especially in underdeveloped countries. However, I recognize part 13 would allow law enforcement and border security agents to communicate better, and I am hopeful that this would help a lot.

We have also talked in this place about managing passports and marking passports to show that somebody is a registered sex offender. When I talked to those in the passport office, they said they were unable to get that information from the RCMP, because the RCMP is not allowed to share that information with them, and so I am hopeful that the bill before us will pass. I have not heard anything from the Liberal government saying one way or the other whether this would fix that problem, as it has not been part of the stated messaging around the bill.

I would note that section 13 is a large section of the bill, yet we hear very little about it. Nonetheless, this is something that I have worked on for many years. Every year or so I do an Order Paper question to the government asking how many passports it has revoked, how many passports it has cancelled and how many refusals

of passports it has offered. From 2015 to 2018, over the first two years of the Liberal government, only 13 cancellations or revocations took place, and only five refusals, to prevent the sexual abuse of children abroad. Many of these were initiated under a Conservative government. Initially there were a number of them, but then it kind of just fell off, and by the time 2018 rolled around, there was none.

Canada has nearly 60,000 registered sex offenders; 72% are child sex predators, so that is over 42,000 convicted child sex offenders. The Liberal government has only cancelled 13 passports, zero passports in the last three years, and has only refused eight.

● (1100)

Based on the work of organizations that I work with, we are aware that Canadian child sex offenders who have been convicted of horrific crimes against children receive passports from the government and, in the past few years, have been travelling abroad. For example, horrendous child abuser Donald Bakker, one of Canada's most notorious, served jail time for travelling to Southeast Asia to abuse children as young as seven years old. Under the Liberal government, he got his passport back and was travelling abroad to impoverished countries over the past number of years. I find this to be unconscionable.

Of 42,500 convicted child sex offenders, over the first seven years of the Liberal government only 13 passports were cancelled or refused. Every year, I submit Order Paper questions to the government, asking what it is doing about this. Interestingly enough, I received one of these Order Paper questions back just yesterday. I asked the RCMP, for example, how many sex offenders leave the country. It wrote back to me saying the RCMP is unable to track the number of sex offenders who leave the country.

What is the point of having a national sex offender registry if we cannot track where these people are going? I thought that was kind of the entire point of it. Particularly, if the RCMP is responsible for this registry, certainly it should be able to track this kind of thing, but it says it is unable to track this. How is this possible? That is my question to the government. Do we not have a moral obligation to prevent the abuse of children outside of our jurisdiction?

There is a requirement for sex offenders to register when they leave the country, and it is an offence to fail to do this. I asked the RCMP how many sex offenders fail to report their absence, and of course, because it does not know how many people are leaving, the RCMP came back to me and said it is unable to confirm how many registered sex offenders fail to report their absence. The RCMP may become aware of it after the fact and then be able to investigate, but it is unknown how many failures happen.

Now, this is where section 13 may be on the right track. I have yet to hear much from the government about this. Would section 13 fix this problem? Section 13 talks a lot about inter-agency communication to try to prevent this kind of thing. I am hopeful that this would be the case. However, the law has been in place since 2015 for all of these things to happen, and under the Liberal government's watch, it has not been enforcing it. It has not been using the law. It has not been using the official registry at all.

Our reporting system seems to be, basically, voluntary and without any accountability. If it were not for the work of civil society groups calling attention to this, there may be no action whatsoever. The only thing the government could share with us was how many notifications the RCMP has received from sex offenders who are on the national sex registry and who had indicated their intention to travel internationally, broken down by year. In 2022, it had 1,773 registered sex offenders register to travel outside of Canada; in 2023, 2,204; in 2024, 3,320. As of May this year, we had nearly 1,000 registered sex offenders notify that they are leaving the country.

I am pleased to see that the government is addressing the barriers that exist in the area of communications back and forth. I think it is doing this entirely because the American government has been complaining about this. The Americans have noted that every time a registered sex offender comes to Canada, nearly 1,000 times a year, they at least inform the Canadian authorities that a registered sex offender is approaching the border, and we have refused many of these people. The Americans have asked that we do the same thing back, and I think that that is why it is being done.

What is not clear from this is, will it work inside Canada? Will the CBSA be able to speak to the passport office? Will the CBSA be able to speak to the RCMP about the sex offender registry? That is not clear at all from the particular communications that the government has come out with.

• (1105)

In Canada, sex offenders are required to report, within seven days before leaving the country, their dates of departure and return, and every address or location at which they expect to stay while outside of the country. As I stated before, we do not really know whether they are reporting or not. The RCMP, because of the lack of information sharing, is unable to even pursue these cases.

I am hopeful Bill C-2 would fix this problem, and I hope the government can assure me this would indeed be the case.

• (1110)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the legislation would do many things. One of the issues the member raised and spent a great deal of time on is sex offenders. Within the sex offender registry, there is a considerable amount of information, and this act would enable the RCMP to share a lot of that information, both domestically and internationally. This is a very strong, positive thing in terms of what the member is talking about.

When we go 30,000 feet in the air and ask what kind of things we are looking at, we can think of the \$1.3 billion to invest in

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things like hundreds of RCMP border control officers, and then the enabling of sharing of information. These are tangible things that are going to make a difference, yet we continue to see Conservatives not wanting to pass legislation.

Does the member feel any obligation to encourage his colleagues to see legislation go to committee stage, at the very least, so we can hear what Canadians and others have to say and have more debate on the issue?

Arnold Viersen: Madam Chair, I think my entire speech outlined the fact that I have zero confidence in the particular Liberal government across the way to actually implement any of these things. I gave a speech about all the great things in section 13 of this bill and my hopefulness about what they are.

However, the government has had 10 years to implement all of these things. These are complaints and issues that have been raised from the day I got elected, back in 2015, so I am not hopeful. There has been zero communication about section 13 in light of passport revocation and any of these kinds of things I have raised around this. I think this bill deserves all the scrutiny we can give it.

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

The Liberals often talk about the Harper years, and they talk about where we legislated, especially with respect to minimums: drugs, guns, sex offences. The Liberals have legislated on guns; they actually weakened sentences on guns in Bill C-5. They have legislated on drugs. They have not touched sex offences once. They have not touched sex offences.

They have refused to legislate on sex offences, the most pernicious and often the most insidious type of offence, with victims serving psychological life sentences, and now they are going to tell us about how they are dealing with sex offences here and that this bill is a panacea? Give me a break.

What does my hon. colleague think?

Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola could not be more right. We have worked together a lot on trying to fix a lot of these problems.

I would note, again, the Harper government put in place the ability to mark sex offenders' passports, to revoke sex offenders' passports and to prevent them from getting passports on the front end. Again, we are talking about fewer than 20 actions taken by the government to deal with sex offenders going abroad to perpetrate their crimes.

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Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is incredible that the members opposite would make reference to Stephen Harper. More importantly, when the current leader of the Conservative Party sat in cabinet, the Conservatives actually cut border control services. That was a cut. We have increased it by over \$1 billion; that is with a “b”. We have invested in more RCMP, more border control. We have brought in substantive legislation. The word that comes to my mind is hypocrisy.

Will the Conservative Party members not recognize a good thing when they see it and allow legislation to pass so we can better serve Canadians, get off the political side of things and start doing work for Canadians? Even Conservative voters want them to do better on the floor of the House of Commons.

Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the antics of the member opposite, which kind of prove our point. The point is that under a Conservative government, we did not have border issues like we do today. We did not have to spend billions of dollars on border security.

The Liberals say we did not spend as much money as them, but the goal is not how much money we spend; the goal is how secure our border is. If we had to spend zero dollars to have a secure border, I would be in favour of that. We do not have a secure border anymore. The Roxham Road situation totally proves that point, and it is a significant problem that appeared under the Liberal government.

• (1115)

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the freedom-loving residents of Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke to speak to Bill C-2, the Liberals' so-called strong borders act.

Conservatives will always support secure borders, the rule of law and the protection of Canadian sovereignty, but we must ensure those who enter our country do so legally, safely and with respect for our values. We support measures that protect Canadians from illegal drug trafficking, human smuggling and organized crime. We support reforms that streamline immigration processes and ensure fairness in our asylum system.

What we will not support are the measures that target law-abiding Canadians. We do not support criminalizing the use of cash. We do not support the warrantless surveillance of Canadians' Internet activity. We do not support giving law enforcement the power to search Canadians' mail without judicial oversight. These are not border issues; these are surveillance measures. These are control measures, and they have no place in a free and democratic society.

In many ways, this bill is an admission of failure by the Liberal government. It has allowed crime and chaos to run rampant. The government claims this bill is about going after international gangs that push fentanyl on Canadians, yet it includes no mandatory prison time for traffickers. There are no new mandatory prison times for gangsters who use guns. This bill proves that the Liberals can swap out their leaders but keep the ideology.

Thanks in part to the Liberals' new censorship law, many Canadians have no idea that the Prime Minister is seeking to ban cash transactions. The Liberals want to make it a criminal offence for

businesses, professionals and charities to accept cash payments of \$10,000 or more in a single transaction or a series of related transactions. This is not a targeted measure against money laundering. It is a blanket restriction that affects law-abiding citizens. It treats legitimate transactions as suspicious simply because they involve physical currency. It forces Canadians into digital payment systems that are traceable, surveilled, controlled and hackable.

Using cash is not a crime. It is a legal form of payment. It is a tool for privacy, autonomy and financial freedom. Criminalizing its use sets a dangerous precedent. Today it is \$10,000. Tomorrow it could be \$5,000, then \$1,000 and eventually nothing. This is a slippery slope toward a cashless society where every transaction is monitored and every citizen is tracked.

We must ask who benefits from this. It is not ordinary Canadians, not small businesses and not charities. The beneficiaries are governments, banks and corporations that profit from data collection and digital control.

Conservatives believe in financial freedom. We believe Canadians should have the right to use cash for legal transactions without fear of prosecution. We oppose this provision and call for its removal from the bill.

I know that many government members were first elected in 2015. They have never sat in opposition. As we all learned from the Liberals' caucus turmoil last year, this is very much a top-down party. I raise this because this bill resurrects the so-called lawful access measures, which grant the government access to Canadians' Internet data without a warrant. This is not the first time the “securitycrats” have tried to bring this into law. They tried to get us to pass it in 2012, when we were a majority government. Fortunately, we had a prime minister who respected and listened to his caucus colleagues. That is why we withdrew the bill.

It is no surprise that fresh off an election, while the Liberal ministers are still trying to find the bathrooms and staff up their offices, the “securitycrats” would slip this in. They want law enforcement to have the power to demand data such as IP addresses, usernames, device identifiers and service usage history based on a mere suspicion standard. This is not on reasonable grounds or probable cause, but just suspicion.

• (1120)

While many actors across the aisle were not here during the last debate on so-called lawful access, my biggest fan, the member for Winnipeg North, was. Here is a great question he raised during that debate:

...the vast majority of the public, and individuals who are watching, are very curious as to the degree that law enforcement officers, or any others who might be designated through the minister, might have to access their history on websites and the content of emails. The minister makes reference that this does not change what is in place today.

Could the minister assure those who are listening to the debate that the government does not, in any fashion whatsoever, allow for any sort of invasion of privacy without some form of a judicial court warrant to enable police to do so?

I am sorry. I am not a great mimic. Even if the Liberal ministers cannot speak honestly about their opposition to these parts of the bill here in the House, I hope they find the courage to do so in caucus.

Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure. That clear wording is why police require reasonable grounds to obtain a warrant. Anything short of that will invite abuse. The problem is in defining “reasonable”. It is why people who are trying to defend their homes are being thrown into jail instead of the armed intruders.

This is not about border security. This is about giving the state unchecked power to monitor Canadians' digital lives. This is the natural precursor for the Internet censorship bill that the Prime Minister has pledged to reintroduce. Warrantless access to Internet data, combined with the vast digital safety bureaucracy the Liberals envision, would make the communists who control China blush.

The only thing that could make this worse is if the government had access to technology that could sift through vast amounts of data quickly and tease out surprising connections. Wait. It does. The Liberals brag about it all the time. That is why they have contracts with U.S. company Palantir. In 2012, when we last debated so-called lawful access, that kind of technology was science fiction. Now it is scientific fact. Canadians do not want Liberal AI spying on them. These snooping sections of the bill must be deleted when it reaches committee.

The Internet is an integral part of 21st-century society. We can see in China that despite vast state surveillance, citizens tolerate the lack of privacy for the convenience of using the Internet for shopping, school or socializing. However, that is not the case with the mail and Canada Post. The Liberals plan to allow police to search the mail without a warrant. That fact would be a decapitating blow to the zombie corporation we refer to as Canada Post.

Not only would this obviously violate section 8 of the charter, but it would also infringe on section 3, the right to vote. Nothing would undermine the confidence of mail-in ballots faster than Liberals giving themselves the power to open mail. For Canadians living overseas, there are no alternatives to voting by mail. If the state can inspect someone's ballot, then their right to vote has been infringed. The mere threat of ballot inspections would be enough for unsavoury actors to pressure overseas voters. Those unsavoury actors would not just be rogue partisans, but foreign agents seeking to undermine our democracy.

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Meanwhile, the fentanyl dealers will switch to FedEx, UPS or drones. Two years ago, correctional officials in B.C. intercepted a pigeon with a tiny backpack filled with drugs. Drug dealers are using Canada Post because it is cheap and easy. Allowing warrantless searches might stop the dealers from using the mail, but it would not stop the dealing and the distribution of drugs. What it would do is stop regular Canadians from trusting the mail, and given the decline in trust and confidence we have seen across democratic countries, this bill would do too little to help and too much to hurt.

Canadians want to have confidence in their government. They want to know that it is tackling security. They want criminals in jail and our border under control, but we cannot have trust in a government that gives itself the power to spy on its citizens without a warrant based on reasonable grounds. It is checks and balances on state power that instill trust. It is still the competent execution of those powers that builds confidence. Conservatives call on this government to remove the sections where trust is undermined.

• (1125)

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I took great exception when the member for Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke said the Liberal Party has a top-down approach. As a matter of fact, the headlines we heard about the Conservative Party were that the Leader of the Opposition maintains tight control over what Conservative MPs say and do.

However, my question hits much closer to home for the member. The word on the street right now, the rumour that has been flying around, is that the newly elected member for Battle River—Crowfoot plans to run in her riding of Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke in the next general election and might even be trying to push her out in order to do that.

Can she assure us that she will be the candidate—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I would remind hon. members that such questions are not really about government business.

The hon. member for Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke.

Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, I was wondering who started that rumour, but let us get back to the bill.

Bill C-2 is a Trojan Horse. It promises security but delivers surveillance. It promises order but delivers control. It is not the kind of legislation that Canadians expect from a government that claims to respect the charter. Let us work together to craft legislation that truly strengthens our borders without weakening our freedoms.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about confidence. She referred to foreign interference and confidence in the democratic system. Many articles have been published on the issue of how to restore public confidence.

The government is currently a minority government. This is what the voters have chosen. The government members should act accordingly. They should try to listen to the opposition parties and have a discussion. As for the members of the official opposition, they should use a constructive tone in their discussions.

In terms of confidence in the electoral system, there is the issue of foreign interference but also how we behave here in the House. What does my colleague think about that?

[English]

Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, I am having trouble getting that out too.

In the House, government members should be respecting, listening to and answering questions according to what speakers actually say. A small modicum of respect for opposition parties will build confidence not only in Parliament but among the people who watch us from home.

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague talk about cash transactions. As we know, cash facilitates money laundering and anonymity.

Canadian banks abide by the Basel accords, which is why Canada's banking system is one of the best in the world. Does my colleague want us to continue letting people use cash, which increases the number of crimes committed by the very criminals we want to lock up by strengthening our laws, while the current government seeks to prevent rather than cure?

What is her stance? Does she think Canada should allow money laundering to continue, or does she think it should abide by the Basel accords and ask Canadian banks to do their job?

[English]

Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, cash is legal tender in Canada. The way we can strengthen security in transactions is not through taking away cash. It is by FINTRAC taking the information that it gathers, all the forms people fill out every time they make deposits or transfer \$10,000 or more, and actually acting upon it, not just collecting the paper.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising the alarming civil liberties violations that the Liberal government is trying to sneak in under the auspices of this border bill. Much of the response we get from the government effectively boils down to "just trust us".

Do Canadians have any reason to trust the government that it will not abuse the broad latitude it is trying to give itself with Bill C-2?

● (1130)

Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, Canadians have lost trust in the government. They did so during COVID when the Liberals refused to allow parliamentarians to see the contracts for the vaccines. They lost trust when different scandals came up. Canadians no longer trust the government. We certainly do not want to see the types of riots occurring across Europe and parts of the Middle East come to Canada. The Liberals have to be respectful and have a budget and then ensure that they are completely—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Vancouver East has the floor.

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, Bill C-2, the strong borders act, was introduced in June by the public safety minister. Framed as legislation to strengthen border security, fight fentanyl trafficking and address U.S. irritants, the 140-page omnibus bill would make sweeping changes across more than 11 existing acts, and it proposes a new framework for digital surveillance of Canadians.

Many aspects of the bill have little or nothing to do with border security. The government is seeking unrelated powers it has unsuccessfully attempted to obtain in the past that present significant threats to human rights and civil liberties. Bill C-2 is not about safety; it is about normalizing surveillance, criminalizing migration, bypassing Parliament and public debate, and attacking Canadians' privacy and charter rights. It would undermine due process, and it is a power grab.

The Liberal government's new strong borders act is one of the most serious threats to Canadians' civil liberties we have seen in years. It makes Stephen Harper's infamous Bill C-51 look tame by comparison. Framed as a national security measure, the legislation would give sweeping new powers to police and intelligence agencies, powers that would override long-standing privacy protections and skirt judicial oversight.

At the heart of Bill C-2 is a deeply troubling expansion of warrantless surveillance. Under the proposed law, the RCMP, CSIS and even undefined "public officers" would be able to demand personal information from a wide range of service providers without ever going before a judge. This includes doctors, banks, landlords, schools and even psychiatrists, and the list can go on.

Let that sink in for one minute. Government agencies could make information demands for when and how long someone has accessed service from a provider or an associate provider related to that service. This of course means that government agencies would know where the provider is located and the timeline, how often and for how long someone has sought service from the provider. Under the bill, the government would be able to access online activity that someone is engaged in, without having to justify it to a court.

These kinds of unchecked powers are ripe for abuse, and historically, we know who pays the highest price. When governments start cutting corners on civil liberties, it is often racialized, low-income, marginalized communities that bear the brunt, but they will not be the only ones. We all would be under this kind of scrutiny.

Even more alarming, Bill C-2 would open the door to increased information sharing with foreign governments, including the United States. Ottawa is currently in talks to join the U.S.' CLOUD Act, the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act, which would allow U.S. law enforcement to access Canadian data stored on servers abroad. That could include deeply personal records, such as whether someone accessed abortion services.

In a post-Roe America, where abortion is criminalized in several states and reproductive health is under surveillance, this is profoundly dangerous. In the Trump era, where the LGBTQ2IA+ community is under attack, this is extremely dangerous. Canadians should never have to worry that their personal medical decisions might be exposed to another country's government, yet the bill makes that possibility very real.

• (1135)

Matt Hatfield of OpenMedia critiqued Bill C-2 for having an “astounding scope of who can receive data demands without a warrant that is unprecedented in Canada.” He is right; we have never seen anything quite like this in Canada being pushed through. It is alarming. It is American-style surveillance creeping north of the border. Canadians were warned about this during the last election. Did the Prime Minister, during the election, tell any Canadians that this is what he was going to do? No, and all of this is to appease Trump.

Groups like the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the BC Civil Liberties Association and the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group are sounding the alarm. They are rightly pointing out that Bill C-2 threatens charter-protected rights to privacy and to freedom from unreasonable search and seizure. These are not abstract concerns; these are rights that go to the heart of a free and democratic society.

If the Prime Minister and the public safety minister are serious about protecting those rights, they must scrap the bill and send it back to the drawing board. It should not be brought forward as an omnibus bill. If they want to address border safety, they should bring forward a bill that addresses border safety. If they want to address fentanyl trafficking, they should bring forward a bill that addresses fentanyl trafficking. They should not lump them in with a 140-page bill and sneak in provisions that would turn Canada into a surveillance state.

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Of course we all want safety. Communities want safety, and we want secure borders. However, we already have existing legal tools, like warrants and court orders, that respect civil liberties and let law enforcement do its job while still protecting civil liberties. Stripping away judicial oversight is not the answer, and that is not how we do things in a democracy.

The public safety minister, in an op-ed about refugee asylum seekers, in 2016, wrote the following:

Our country will never be the same again, and collectively our doors should always be open, not just to those who come to our shores, but those taking extraordinary risks to cross other shores in search of refuge. We must understand that people in normal circumstances do not risk their lives—and the lives of their families—to [flee] for reasons such as economic stability. They do so out of desperation and as a last resort.

Now, as minister, he is putting up walls and barriers through the legislation. Yes, refugees and those who need safety are under attack under the bill. Bill C-2 would deny hearings entirely to refugees from the United States, block applications from those who have been in Canada over a year, and ignore risks of persecution, torture or even death. It echoes Trump's asylum policies, and if I might add, there are over 150 Canadians in ICE detention right now. What is the government doing? Nothing. We have heard nothing about what the government is doing with Canadians who are held in ICE detention in the United States.

Bill C-2 is not about border security; it is about expanding government surveillance. It threatens to chill freedom of expression, erode trust in doctors and service providers, and normalize the sharing of personal information with foreign powers. Canadians deserve better. We cannot allow democratic norms in Canada to become roadkill under pressure from an increasingly authoritarian and unhinged American president.

This is not the Canada I know. This is not the Canada I think Canadians voted for. I call on every member of the House to vote against the bill and send the government back to the drawing board.

• (1140)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt: It is easy to tell where the member stands on the legislation. I do want clarification on one specific issue. She makes reference to the issue of being able to claim refugee status.

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In Canada, there are literally hundreds of thousands of people today who are on some form of a temporary visa. Does the member believe that, if people have been in Canada for a lengthy period of time on a temporary visa, every one of them should be able to claim refugee status, even if they have been in Canada for over a year?

Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, not all people with a visa who are here in Canada want to claim refugee status. Some of them are actually seeking permanent resident status. Some of them are having their permits extended.

What has happened with our immigration system is the mismanagement of the system by the Liberal government. In fact, I remember that both the Liberals and Conservatives called for an expansion of temporary foreign workers. The NDP members were the only ones who said, "No, wait a minute; we should not be doing that." The NDP members were the only ones who actually said that if we need more workers here in Canada, we should make sure we go through the proper process, which includes allowing them to get permanent resident status on arrival.

Let us meet our labour demands for the full range of workers, the low-skilled, medium-skilled and high-skilled, and not just what the government has right now, targeting the high-skilled workers and then pushing the rest of them through the temporary foreign workers process.

This needs to be looked at in a serious way, and it should be dealt with in a fair way so that all workers are valued here in Canada and are not subject to exploitation.

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the last Parliament, there was considerable debate on the fundamental right to privacy. The legislation never did see the end of the day, and the New Democratic Party did work with the Conservatives to push forward our concerns about the usage of data and about the provisions being put forward by the Liberal government under the former prime minister.

Will the member agree with the Conservatives that some of the provisions in the legislation would constitute government overreach without the proper constraints put in place to protect a Canadian's fundamental right to privacy?

Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the NDP's view of the bill is that it should actually be scrapped entirely. The government is trying to shove through a whole variety of different things in an omnibus bill, a 140-page bill, stripping Canadians of their basic charter rights and stripping due process, all in the name of border security.

If the government wants to tackle safer borders, it should bring forward a bill that specifically talks about that. We could examine it, study it and then debate it and determine whether it should be amended and passed. If the government wants to address criminality, it should bring forward a bill on trafficking, on criminality specifically, not shove it all under a bill that is 140 pages long, with provisions that have nothing to do with border security, that have nothing to do with criminality and that have everything to do with tackling and violating Canadians' basic civil liberties and expanding the government's surveillance capabilities on Canadians. That is wrong.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to the comments of my colleague opposite, and I beg to disagree with some of the points she raised. Though I am far from a proponent of Bill C-2, an analysis shows that the bill could ultimately be beneficial. That said, some significant changes may be needed.

My colleague says that a 150-page bill is an omnibus bill, which surprises me a little. I think that comment may be a little over the top. However, the substance of what she is saying sort of makes sense. For example, she mentioned concerns that this bill would be passed without any substantial amendments.

Is she also concerned that the Conservatives might repeat what they did last spring, when they did the Liberals' dirty work for them by preventing us from taking the time to properly study bills introduced in the House? Some aspects of Bill C-2 deserve to be studied and explored in more detail.

• (1145)

[English]

Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the NDP believes that the bill should be scrapped. We do not support the bill, because it is not what it purports to be. There might be some provisions in it that are good, but they should not be in a giant bill with more than 11 acts all shoved into one bill—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was listening to the remarks of the NDP member for Vancouver East, whom I served with on the opposite side in the B.C. legislature and now serve with here, and I must admit that a lot of what she had to say resonated with how we feel on the Conservative side, although we are not totally aligned.

I want to begin by thanking the residents of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge and Mission for electing me for a third term. This is the first term I will be representing part of Mission. I share that responsibility with my colleague from Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford. It is a privilege.

There were 13,000 more votes this election compared to the last election, and I attribute that to different things. Obviously, our leader is a very powerful spokesperson, but people are struggling economically in my communities, many people, and across Canada. A big concern is the rampant drugs and lawlessness sweeping our nation, which do not need to be taking place and were not prior to the Liberals being in power.

When I went door to door, I often asked people if they thought things had gotten better since the Liberals came to power in terms of the economy, prosperity, crime or in general. I would tell them that if they really felt that way, they should vote Liberal. However, I did not hear anybody tell me that things have gotten better. They have not gotten better at all. Things have gotten a lot worse.

With Bill C-2, the Liberals are trying to make it look like they are doing something about crime and the borders, but it is full of half measures, things they are overlooking and things they are getting wrong. Canadians are deeply concerned about the alarming upswing in violence that is shaking our communities. It weighs heavily on us, and there is such a dichotomy. My riding is in the Vancouver area. It is such a magnificent, beautiful area in the nation and the world to live in, yet what we are seeing happening in our streets at night throughout the land is totally out of sync. It should not be this way.

There have been horrific acts of violence that remind us of the urgent need to restore safety and security in our country. Think of the tragic Lapu-Lapu Day event in Vancouver, where 11 innocent lives were taken. It stands as one of the most devastating mass killings in our nation's history.

There have been senseless killings and violent crime in communities across the nation. They are not isolated incidents. They reflect a disturbing trend of violence that Canadians everywhere are feeling. Violent crime is up 50% since the Liberals have been in power, gang-related homicides are up 78%, sexual violations against children are up 118%, human trafficking is up 83% and sexual assaults are up 74%. In B.C., extortions are up 500%.

For generations, since the opening of the west, there was a real contrast between Canada and the U.S. in our minds in how we viewed Canada and how the world viewed Canada. Canada was known for peace, order and good government, with the RCMP going out on horseback to clean up places like Fort Whoop-Up in Alberta before it was formed as a province, which was filled with bandits and liquor smugglers.

• (1150)

When we compare what was in Canada then to the lawlessness in the States, that is no longer the case, which is terrible. People feel it. They tell me they are worried about walking in their neighbourhoods, about crime creeping closer to home and about whether or not their loved ones are truly safe. It is not the Canada we know and should accept.

Unfortunately, under the Liberal government, violent crime has gone up significantly. The facts speak for themselves. After nearly a decade in office, the Liberals have failed to prioritize public safety. Their soft-on-crime policies include reduced sentences for serious offenders and the erosion of accountability in our justice system, which have left communities vulnerable. Criminals are emboldened while victims and families are left behind.

The Conservatives take a different view. We believe that Canadians deserve to feel safe in their homes, their streets and their communities. That means ending catch-and-release bail policies that put dangerous repeat offenders back on the street. It means restoring tougher penalties for violent criminals and giving law enforcement

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the tools they need to do their jobs effectively. It means supporting families and communities as they heal from tragedies. We owe it to the victims in every community shaken by violence. The government needs to stand up for the innocent, hold violent offenders accountable and make public safety a true priority once again.

For over a decade, we have urged the Liberal government to reverse dangerous policies that have let violent criminals walk free. The Liberals have allowed our borders to become increasingly porous and have left our justice system in disarray. I know the Liberal member opposite said the Liberals put an extra \$1 billion into border security, but the number of illegal immigrants going from Canada to the States is up 600% since they have been in power. We really do not keep good track of those coming from the States to Canada. Everybody is pretty much welcome. Look at Roxham Road.

Now, after years of ignoring the warning signals, after tens of thousands of Canadians have become victims of repeat violent offenders, the Liberals are scrambling. They have dropped Bill C-2, a bloated omnibus bill that tries to do too much and achieves too little where it matters most.

Let me be clear. The Conservatives are ready to support elements of this bill, but we are deeply concerned about several provisions that do not go far enough or go in the wrong direction.

What is the biggest failure of this bill? It is the failure to fix our broken bail system, the catch-and-release system. It is not just a phrase, but a dangerous reality that Canadians are facing in their cities. Criminals, including those charged with trafficking fentanyl, smuggling firearms or committing violent assaults, are being routinely released on bail, often within hours. In Vancouver, we saw the same 40 criminals arrested 5,000 times in one year. It is frustrating for police. They ask what the use of arresting people is.

The bill also fails to introduce mandatory prison sentences for fentanyl traffickers. It still allows house arrest for a shocking number of serious crimes, including some forms of sexual assault, kidnapping and human trafficking. It is too weak on crime and far too strong when it comes to government overreach.

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We are extremely alarmed by the provisions in this legislation that threaten Canadians' civil liberties, provisions that could allow the government to open their mail without proper oversight. There are measures that allow authorities to compel Internet companies to hand over private data without a warrant. There is also concerning language about limiting the use of cash, which is vital to our seniors, small businesses and rural communities.

• (1155)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have a new Prime Minister. We have more new members of Parliament than any other political entity in the House of Commons. Since the end of April, we have seen tax breaks for 20-plus million Canadians. We have built a stronger one Canadian economy than we have ever seen, which the Conservatives supported. The member talked about the need for bail reform. We have a Prime Minister with a new cabinet that is committed to bringing in several pieces of bail legislation, some of which we are going to see this fall. All of this is in a very short period of time.

After listening to the Conservatives, including the member, I think the issue of misleading Canadians through debate is a concern. They try to give the impression that any letter carrier can open up a letter anytime he or she wants. They try to give the impression there will not be a need for a warrant to open up a letter. Both of those things are not true.

Can the member provide his thoughts on misleading information?

Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, there might be a new Prime Minister and some new Liberal members, but it is the same old policy. As a matter of fact, we are seeing things getting worse. The deficit, when they eventually put the budget forward, looks like it is going to be double what was originally intended.

We are seeing a lot of talk, and I am hearing that on the doorsteps and as I am talking with businesses. They are saying it sounds really good, but they are not seeing the evidence. Bill C-2 seems to be more of that: a lot of talk and not much evidence.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague touched on border security. I live in an area not far from the border with the United States, and I have had the opportunity to look into the issue of border crossings.

The major issue is that there were job cuts at the border crossings under the Conservatives. The Liberal government boasts about being a new government and having a fresh vision. It is now proposing improvements to border crossings, but without hiring additional staff for the Canada Border Services Agency.

Quebec is calling for this, and so are we. Additional staff is essential to really address this security issue.

What does my colleague think about that?

Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, the situation at the border is getting much worse. Roxham Road is not far from Montreal. We, the Conservatives, support the idea of hiring thousands more officers in order to end drug trafficking and human smuggling.

We would also like to see officers stationed not only at official border crossings, but also along the entire length of the border. People can cross illegally by other routes. Investments must also be made in acquiring scanners for ports and in many other areas.

We need to take our borders seriously.

[English]

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, according to Statistics Canada, total sexual assaults have risen 74.83%, 90% of which are against women. Why has the Liberal Party enacted policies that have done so much to hurt and damage women? Do the Liberals not respect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the right of women to live free of the fear of being hurt in our society?

Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, it is stunning, because the Liberals have brought in laws that essentially force judges to release criminals on the least onerous terms and as quickly as possible. It is not just chaos; it is dangerous, and women are feeling it.

• (1200)

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a real honour for me to rise in the House for the first time after the summer to speak to Bill C-2, the strong borders act. I am speaking on behalf of the residents of my constituency of Davenport, whom I am so honoured to represent for the fourth time.

The need for the legislation is as great today as it was when it was introduced in June, and I look forward to helping make the case for the bill. When we talk about strong borders, on this side of the House, we are not talking about building walls; we are talking about providing tools that would protect everyone in Canada from the kinds of threats we could not have imagined not that long ago.

Let us think of Bill C-2 as offering a tool kit. The tools in the bill are designed to protect us from organized crime, hostile state actors, human traffickers, money launderers and drug cartels. These are the people who are flooding our streets with fentanyl, sexually exploiting children online, smuggling people to our borders or trying to make dirty money clean. These are criminals, plain and simple, who are using every tool of modern technology to commit crimes.

Law enforcement is playing catch-up as criminals find new ways to exploit gaps in our system as quickly as we close the ones they were just using. Some call it playing whack-a-mole. We can argue over the finer points of what we should be doing, but there can be no argument at all over the need for immediate and urgent action. We on this side of the House believe that Bill C-2 is the action we must take to properly protect our borders and to move on multiple fronts. This explains why the bill touches on so many areas.

For example, we might not have the Oceans Act at the very top of our list for amending when thinking of the strong borders act, but by making adjustments and including it in the proposed legislation, if passed, the bill would allow the Coast Guard to conduct security patrols and collect, analyze and share information and intelligence for security purposes. This would help protect our maritime borders, especially in the Arctic.

Fentanyl traffickers both inside and outside Canada use Canada Post to move their lethal product. A tiny amount of fentanyl, mere milligrams, can kill someone. It also fits neatly into an envelope. Under the current Canada Post Corporation Act, it is illegal for that envelope to be opened. However, if Bill C-2 passes, it would change that. With the bill, law enforcement could go to a judge, obtain a warrant, and search and seize drugs such as fentanyl from Canada Post mail. With this change, Canada Post would be on exactly the same footing as the big courier companies, and criminals would lose an easy way to ship drugs.

This is a much-needed policy change. For criminals, borders are something to be ignored. Borders are an inconvenience. They add to the cost of doing business. Our job is to make borders real and to make sure criminals cannot hide behind our modern communication tools to conduct their business. For Canada, this means ensuring law enforcement can properly investigate those who would do us harm by creating a proper lawful access regime to allow law enforcement to respond to the challenges it faces from criminals.

The changes proposed in Bill C-2 would help bring our laws and policies in line with those of our allies, particularly in the Five Eyes alliance; they have had their own versions of some of the same tools for many years. It is important to remember that the Canadian version will be in keeping with Canadian values, consistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

• (1205)

There has been considerable public discussion about this issue since Bill C-2 was tabled, and I look forward to the debate in this venerable House over the coming hours and days.

There is one important element I want to highlight about our proposal. Some have argued that the lawful access regime being proposed is a major attack on privacy rights. I would argue that it is not. Rather, it is carefully structured to calibrate law enforcement's access to information with the nature of information being sought. For the vast majority of information requests, a judicial warrant is required. There are a couple of exceptions to that, but they are ones that I believe all sides of the House can support.

I will give a couple of examples. First, Bill C-2 clarifies the ability of law enforcement to use specific powers and seize specific information without a warrant in urgent, time-sensitive circumstances. One such circumstance would be the live and active abuse of a child. I am sure we can all agree that stopping the abuse of a child is an appropriate exercise of police authority.

The second and other instance is when police are trying to find basic information about someone as part of an investigation. This typically happens in the early stages of a police investigation. What we are talking about here is basic information, essentially something that responds to simple yes-or-no kinds of questions. What

police would glean from the answer would allow them to go to a judge, seek a warrant and obtain more information. Again, the object of the exercise is to allow law enforcement to move at the same speed as the criminals they are pursuing. Due process is maintained, but speed is also critical for police when pursuing those who use digital tools to communicate.

The bill has many more elements, and we will be discussing them over the course of the debate today. Amendments to the proceeds of crime, the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, among others, all add up to a complete and compelling package of reforms that modernize our laws and protect us from those who would do us harm.

Bill C-2 builds on the work we began last December when we announced a \$1.3-billion investment in border security. These additional investments are helping our law enforcement and intelligence agencies keep pace with transnational organized crime groups, which have become more sophisticated in their use of new technologies, such as drones, 3-D printers and encrypted communications, to carry out cross-border crimes.

Under our border plan, we are hiring more personnel and delivering more tools and resources, such as advanced technology, drones, surveillance equipment, canine teams, helicopters and more. We have also listed seven transnational organized crime groups as terrorist entities under the Criminal Code and are constantly monitoring to determine if more should be added. These listings allow us to take direct action against organized crime groups, such as by freezing their assets in Canada.

Canadians expect us to do everything we can to combat crime and keep people safe. It is our essential duty as a government. The bill is necessary, but we make no claims of perfection. The Minister of Public Safety has made it clear that the government is open to constructive amendments. I look forward to an equally constructive debate today.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are so many elements of this speech by the member opposite that I could address, including why Canadians should trust the same old Liberal government to fix the crisis when it created the crisis. The member even referenced that it was the same government in part of her speech.

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However, the part that I am most interested in is what she said about Canada Post opening mail. She said that law enforcement can go to a judge and get a warrant. I wonder if the member opposite could read the portion of the bill that describes clearly that the judge and the warrant would be required.

● (1210)

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, the strong borders act would make critical amendments to legislation that would advance our government's priorities to keep Canadians safe and secure through strengthening our border and making some additional changes, including the changes that she has referenced to the Canada Post Corporation Act. The way crime is conducted these days has absolutely changed, so the government has to modernize its legislation to be able to go after the perpetrators.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech addressing the issue of criminal gangs and border security.

I would like to point out that the Bloc Québécois has already raised this issue, particularly through the bill introduced by my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord, which sought to cut off funding to criminal organizations. I should point out that one of the purposes of the bill was to make it easier to seize property belonging to anyone convicted of an offence involving criminal gangs. To help fight organized crime, the bill also provided for the creation of a list of criminal organizations. As a matter of principle, we would be happy to go back to committee to study Bill C-2, in particular by taking a constructive approach to improving it.

Has my colleague had a chance to look at the bill my colleague introduced last fall? Does she think that might be an avenue to explore going forward?

[English]

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member and the other members of the Bloc Québécois for being very passionate about this issue. There should be no doubt about it: Bill C-2 is about taking more decisive action to crack down on crime. That absolutely means that we will be cracking down on money laundering and terrorist financing. I want to assure the member that any ideas they have should be brought to committee, which is where the bill would go. We will take all the best ideas to make sure that this is the strongest bill possible moving forward.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to welcome my colleague back to the House of Commons and thank her for the very reflective thoughts that she shared. We have listened, in the House of Commons today, to many comments that our colleagues have made about the bill. We know that Canadians sent us here with a mandate to collaborate. Canadian voters, including Conservative voters, want us to take action on the borders.

Can the member talk about ways that we can co-operate, collaborate and even take the bill to committee, make sure that many amendments are considered and bring the bill to pass?

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, indeed, I think it is non-partisan. It is absolutely important for us to ensure that we continue to have

updated legislation that allows our government to take strong action to prevent crime, to ensure that our law enforcement officers at all levels have the tools they need to disrupt any type of crime and to hold people to account for criminal activity. I will tell everyone that we will take the best suggestions. We will work with all members of every party in the House to ensure that we have the strongest law both now and moving forward.

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the member misrepresented what the bill really does. What the bill really does is expand surveillance and data collection from individuals without requiring a judicial warrant. She said it would require one.

That is not what the bill says. Could she clarify her comments?

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, first I will say to the member that I think we have spent quite a bit of time addressing issues of privacy here in the House. If there are any concerns around privacy on his part and, for some reason, we need to make adjustments around the privacy concerns he might have, I would ask him to bring them to committee.

● (1215)

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today on behalf of the hard-working residents of Oshawa. When I return from my city to the chamber, I always carry the voices of our workers in Oshawa who build our economy, of families who keep our neighbourhood strong and of young people who deserve the chance to build a future in the city they call home. They are the strength of Oshawa, and they deserve a government as strong as they are and as hard-working as they are.

Every family in Oshawa deserves and wants the same thing: safe streets where children can walk without fear, secure borders that stop drugs and guns from entering our neighbourhoods, and a government that protects their rights while holding criminals accountable. Bill C-2 claims to deliver these things, but a closer look shows it offers more rhetoric than results. It mixes a few measures worth supporting with many that leave Canadians feeling less free, less safe and less confident in their government.

The fentanyl crisis has devastated many Canadian communities, including my own in Oshawa and our downtown core. Too many lives have been cut short. Too many parents have stood in sorrow at vigils for their sons and their daughters. First responders race from call to call, fighting to save lives from overdose after overdose, reflecting the depth of a crisis, including the human cost, that continues to grip our city.

Liberals create a crisis and somehow expect Canadians to trust that they are the ones to fix it. It is not enough to ban chemicals; traffickers must face justice, yet the bill would allow many dealers to serve sentences from home. Families in Oshawa do not believe that a fentanyl dealer should be sitting on the couch; they believe the dealer should be behind bars. These dealers are not small-time offenders; they are people whose actions have ended lives, destroyed families and terrorized our communities.

For 10 years, the Liberal government has failed to secure Canada's borders. Our officers do their best with the tools they have, but the tools are not enough. Illegal drugs, stolen vehicles and firearms flow in while Canadians pay the price. Throughout that time, Conservatives have consistently called for stronger border security, more CBSA agents, high-powered scanners at land crossings and ports, and systems to track departures of deportees. These are practical steps that would stop threats before they hit our streets.

Cracking down on money laundering is essential of course. Oshawa families work hard, pay their taxes and play by the rules. Criminal gangs should not be able to wash their profits through loopholes, yet part 11 of Bill C-2 takes a wrong turn. It would impose a blanket ban on cash transactions over \$10,000. While gangsters have used cash to launder money, this sweeping ban would punish law-abiding citizens, such as seniors who rely on cash, tradespeople and small businesses, without evidence that it would stop organized crime at all.

What I find even more troubling is that access to cash can be crucial for women and individuals trying to escape abusive relationships, because financial independence can be a lifeline. I cannot tell members how many times I have encountered victims of intimate partner violence who feel stuck and trapped. Without control over their money, it becomes much easier for an abuser to maintain power and control, trapping the person in a cycle of dependence and making it harder to safely escape. Taking away cash as a safe option leaves some of the most vulnerable Canadians with fewer tools to protect themselves.

Perhaps the most concerning factors of Bill C-2 are the sections that would undermine civil liberties. The Supreme Court has affirmed that Canadians have a right to privacy in their Internet records. Bill C-2 seeks to undo that, allowing officials to obtain subscriber information without a warrant in so-called urgent circumstances.

Shockingly, the bill would even give Canada Post new powers to open and inspect personal mail. Canadians should be confident that what they send through the mail will remain private and confidential. Allowing the government to rifle through letters and packages is a dangerous intrusion into everyday life. It is exactly the kind of invasion of privacy I came to expect as normal when I lived in Communist China as a young teacher.

• (1220)

Part 15 goes further; it would compel companies to build back doors into their systems. Once built, those back doors could be accessed without judicial oversight. In a bid to win trade concessions from the U.S., the Prime Minister has put our rights and values on the bargaining table. Bill C-2's lawful access provisions would

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erode a last line of defence to ensure that people can have safe experiences online and off-line.

International human rights bodies have recognized the importance of encryption to protecting the safety and privacy of people. Encryption ensures that people have safe lines of communication online when they need them most. For survivors of intimate partner violence, encryption is a lifeline that secures confidential communication about escape plans and protects victims, including children, from abusers.

Many families in Oshawa include newcomers who fled regimes that spied on their citizens, and they came to Canada for freedom. They should not see those same shadows falling over their lives here.

Canadians remember 2022, when the government froze bank accounts of individuals it disagreed with politically. Under Bill C-2, banks could collect and use personal information without consent, and accounts could be frozen on suspicion alone. Ordinary Canadians should never face this risk. We learn from experience. When Liberals are given too much power, we can be certain they will abuse it.

Bill C-2 is over 100 pages long and would amend 14 acts, yet it omits reforms Canadians have been crying out for. Bail reform is absent. Catch and release would remain in place. There would be no mandatory prison terms for fentanyl traffickers or violent gangsters.

Families in Oshawa are now afraid to let their kids walk downtown. Shopkeepers are exhausted from repeat thefts. Police officers see the same criminals return to the streets. Canadians do not want gestures; it is time for action. Canadians wonder how our streets reached this point. Some claim we need bail reform, but in fact we already have it, and it is making things worse.

The Liberals' Bill C-75 rewrote the rule so that judges are instructed to let offenders out at the first chance and under the weakest conditions possible. That was not an accident; it was a deliberate policy. The results are plain to see in Vancouver. We know, and it has been said today, the same 40 habitual offenders have been cycled through our system over 6,000 times. That is about 150 arrests each in a single year, which is a shocking figure that tells the story of a system that has collapsed. Arrest, release and repeat is the reality across Canada.

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Conservatives have been warning for years that this is a revolving door that endangers our neighbourhoods. What has the Prime Minister done? Instead of fixing the law, he closed Parliament, spent his summer globe-trotting and left Canadians to deal with the consequences. Imagine if instead of chasing headlines abroad he had repealed Bill C-75 months ago. How many break-ins, assaults or violent crimes could have been avoided?

Conservatives have offered practical solutions for many years. The Minister of Public Safety has already admitted the true purpose of the bill: removing irritants for the United States. Canadian security, for the minister, has become secondary. With Bill C-2, the government risks surrendering Canadians' privacy, financial freedoms and safety, all for political convenience. This is not leadership; this is appeasement.

Conservatives do not oppose all of Bill C-2. Some measures deserve to be studied and improved. However, we will not give the government a blank cheque to erode the freedoms of Canadians. Individuals should never be asked to choose between safety and liberty. They deserve both.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether my colleague is open to taking this to committee. We have heard a lot of comments that, obviously, Conservatives want to discuss the bill further, and it will be going to committee. Will the member support the bill's going to committee so we can look at it further and make sure it represents the desires and thoughts of Canadians who voted for us, and to co-operate and make sure we are working together in bringing legislation that makes sense for Canada?

• (1225)

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, I think most Conservative members of the House have said that there are elements of the bill that are good and that are strong; however, there are so many elements that are concerning that we have to look a lot closer. There are so many things, like bail reform and sentencing provisions, that are simply not addressed. I do not know if that is something that can be changed by amendments in committee, but we will have to see.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the Bloc Québécois's status of women critic, I was obviously paying close attention to the part of my colleague's speech where she talked about violence against women.

We have been hearing about this since this morning. We are talking about it, but the reality is solving this issue will require multiple solutions, including shelters that can help women escape the cycle of violence. My colleague talked about how poverty traps women in a cycle of violence. Being able to offer them housing is essential and important for getting them out of this cycle.

This summer, we heard that the federal government was holding back funds for CMHC, which meant shelter projects were delayed. Would my colleague agree that we should ensure that funds earmarked for shelters are transferred so that these projects can be implemented?

[English]

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, a day does not go by in our communities when we are not faced with sad stories and difficult situations, and I agree that things need to change. The bill in particular is an attack on women who cannot escape homes without access to and sometimes hiding away large amounts of cash in order to escape. I will add here that it is a good time to mention the wonderful community organizations in Oshawa that support women and folks with intimate partner violence and who shelter them, including The Denise House. I thank them.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated the comments from my colleague, because over and over again in my mind, I ask why Canadians are so apprehensive as to the intent of the government with the bill before us. The truth of the matter is that they are very concerned about their privacy, and rightly so.

The member mentioned already the abuse of Canadians' rights and freedoms when the warrantless surveillance by the government, along with its use of the banks as a third party, froze everyday Canadians' bank accounts, which put the element of mistrust in the government at a whole new level. I would like her comments on that and how in the world the government could expect that a bill of this size and magnitude, with so many good things mixed in with those that are not, could be something Canadians would give the government the opportunity to regain trust with.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, I do think the majority of Canadians struggle with trusting the current government with their life. From those to whom much is given, much shall be required. History has shown that the Liberal government will always take advantage of its powers and will take away the rights of law-abiding Canadians, and this is something that concerns us all greatly on this side of the House. It seems some of the NDP members have expressed some of the same concerns, and I am happy to hear that. I hope we will, on that point, stand together.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about lawful access in sharing information. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police actually supports it. Does she support the chiefs of police statement in support of that aspect of the legislation?

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, I am a very strong supporter of our police services and our police associations, and I support all of the things that they need. I can say that what they are talking about most is bail reform. That is their biggest concern today.

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see you again and to speak to Bill C-2, a large, complex bill that covers several aspects related to border security, the fight against organized crime, illegal financing and, above all, immigration and IRCC. I may elaborate on that later.

It is no secret. As my colleagues from Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon and Lac-Saint-Jean indicated, the Bloc Québécois will support this bill at second reading, but it will do so cautiously, as always.

As members may recall, the Bloc Québécois has long been calling for better border control. My former colleague Kristina Michaud asked many questions on the matter, particularly about auto theft, fentanyl trafficking and money laundering. The Bloc Québécois did not wait until pressure started coming from the Trump administration before raising concerns here in the House that line up with the considerations in this bill.

In some ways, this bill represents major progress. However, it is a massive bill, and it includes new powers that could alarm civil rights advocates. I think that was mentioned quite a bit this morning. That is why the committee will have to be diligent and flesh out certain things. I trust my colleagues will do just that.

However, one major point still needs to be addressed: the understaffing at the Canada Border Services Agency and at the RCMP. The government seems to be in austerity mode, so I look forward to seeing what solutions will be proposed for this.

I would like to add some points regarding the issue of immigration and IRCC. Parts 6 to 9 of the bill include proposals that go hand in hand with questions that have been asked by the Bloc Québécois. I think that it is important to highlight this because partisan politics has often been used as an excuse in the House. Whenever members of the Bloc Québécois would raise immigration issues, both Conservatives and Liberals would say that the Bloc Québécois was using the immigration debate for partisan purposes. I will come back to this point because the past few weeks have shown what can happen when the immigration debate is used for partisan purposes.

I will not dwell at much length on the Leader of the Opposition's somewhat inappropriate outburst concerning temporary foreign workers. I can assure people that, where I come from, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, his words created quite a stir because a lot of manufacturing companies depend primarily on temporary foreign workers for their survival. With so much talk about immigration at the moment, many members of society have come under its influence and have adopted a rather narrow outlook on the problems that affect us. We have to differentiate between essential temporary foreign workers in certain sectors, and others who may be less essential in other sectors. Realities in the regions may differ from the realities facing large urban centres.

We have to make a distinction there, but we also have to distinguish between the different types of immigration. Asylum seekers do not have the same status as temporary foreign workers. What has harmed Quebec in recent years is the considerable influx of asylum seekers. That has put pressure on public services, housing,

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health care services, education and so on. When the Bloc Québécois raised those issues in the last Parliament, I think the government was less attentive.

For that reason, I would like us to debate the issue of immigration a little more calmly in the coming months or weeks. From what I have seen since 2019, though, it seems unlikely.

● (1230)

What have we been talking about since 2019? I would remind the House that the Bloc Québécois spoke out many times against what was happening at Roxham Road, against the Century Initiative and against an immigration system that, in my opinion, is broken and in crisis. Our constituency offices have practically become Service Canada offices. That is the reality for Bloc Québécois members, but I imagine the same is true for Conservative and Liberal members. We are making up for the shortcomings of the citizenship and immigration system.

I say that because I find that there are some potentially worthwhile solutions in Bill C-2. Part 6, which seeks to share information with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, could address some of the problems we have experienced.

Just today, my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères asked the Minister of Transport to launch an investigation into the notorious Driver Inc. issue. I am not exactly sure how these drivers are referred to, but they are temporary foreign workers who apply for a bulk transport licence without necessarily meeting all the conditions. As we saw in the media not too long ago, they have caused accidents that turned fatal. Perhaps it is because they do not follow all the road safety rules, they do not follow all the rules related to logbook entries and they do not have safe and healthy work equipment. Perhaps that is something that should be studied as part of this bill. I know that my colleague for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères already has documentation on that. Perhaps that is something that could be addressed in committee.

There is also all the work that will be done on reviewing asylum claims. I am thinking of part 7 in particular. I do not know whether my colleagues have seen this in their ridings, but, in mine, we have a serious problem with temporary foreign students. A whole host of temporary foreign students arrived in Quebec with fake acceptance letters, which enabled them to file asylum claims. What have been the consequences of that? I will talk about what we experienced in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean in particular. This has put an enormous amount of pressure on universities and colleges. In recent years, they have had to deal with many applications, some of which were quite far-fetched, without any support from the federal government.

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I will just mention the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. French foreign students fall under the memorandum of agreement, so they do not pose a problem. However, there have been disastrous cases where these students' applications were delayed because of the difficult situation involving foreign students who are arriving in the country to make asylum claims.

I welcome this element of Bill C-2. It could help restore the reputation of our universities, which was damaged this summer. Universities jump through many hoops to recruit foreign students. It is a very competitive environment. In my riding of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi had a strategy in place for the past 20 years to be a welcoming place for foreign students. Unfortunately for the university, the excellent reputation it had built up was ruined—and I mean that—due to an inadequate response from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. I can say that this inadequate response is not unrelated to the fact that we did not have better legislation to regulate students who apply and come here on false pretenses.

• (1235)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things I can appreciate is that members, particularly from the Bloc, understand that there are aspects of the legislation that would be good to see advanced, which is really encouraging to see, but before we can get to the committee stage, we have to finish the debate that is taking place here. We have to at least be aware of that.

Would the member not agree that there are many different stakeholders? I cited one in my last question, which is the chiefs of police. There are certain aspects of the legislation for which they are very supportive.

A good way to continue the debate and make those potential amendments would be by seeing it go to committee. Can the member provide his thoughts on the important role that standing committees also play at the House?

• (1240)

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, it is rare for me to agree with the member for Winnipeg North. The parliamentary session is off to a very good start.

I think we need to continue the work. However, the message I would have liked people to take away from my speech is that sometimes, politically, there needs to be an adult in the room. In the past, in the House, when we have talked about immigration, we have been accused left, right and centre of politicizing an issue for ideological reasons.

What makes me laugh a bit is that, when the Bloc Québécois members were talking today about what is in this bill, including parts 7 and 8 on illegal border crossers, that same member for Winnipeg North rose to say that we were fearmongering.

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech, especially the part where

he talked about the services we need to provide to our constituents in relation to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, that is, gathering information about people who come to our offices looking for information about their immigration status, temporary foreign worker status or other status.

Does my colleague think that the government should assign even more people to work in our offices so that we can respond more quickly to our constituents? We have waiting lists that are sometimes extremely long.

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, it sounds like we agree. My colleague is absolutely right. The majority of MPs in the House, who want to do their job properly, are overwhelmed by highly complex IRCC-related requests.

The result is that everyone is frustrated. People come to our offices hoping to find solutions because, the truth is, the immigration system is broken. Unfortunately, it is difficult to get someone on the line. The people in our offices are having a hard time talking to anyone.

I agree with my colleague on this point. The responsibility lies entirely at the government's feet. Unfortunately, it does not seem to fully appreciate the scale of the immigration crisis that Canada and Quebec are currently facing.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Jonquière on his speech. I also thank him for referring to some of the issues I am currently working on.

I would like to ask him a question in relation to Bill C-2.

My colleague referred to the immigration crisis. I think that he is absolutely right. It really is a crisis. Everyone is talking about it, and we see it in our offices. Can he tell us more about the impact this is having on our resources in Quebec and also talk to us about the unfair distribution of refugee claimants across the country? Is there anything in Bill C-2 that would solve this crisis?

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. Unfortunately, I do not think that Bill C-2 does anything to address how unfairly Quebec has been treated.

Quebec had to foot the bill to take in more than its share of asylum seekers, which put pressure on the health and education systems and the housing supply, as we have said here many times. This whole crisis may have been caused by the previous government and its Century Initiative.

In my opinion, this bill seeks to fix problems that the Liberal government itself created. However, the problem that the bill does not fix is that of fairness to the Government of Quebec, which paid more than its fair share as a result of mistakes made by the federal government.

[English]

Mike Dawson (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back. I want to welcome you and all our colleagues back for another session.

I am pleased to have spent the summer back home in my constituency, Miramichi—Grand Lake. I spent the past few months connecting with friends, neighbours and constituents and listening to their concerns. Just last week I attended a standing-room-only public meeting called by the downtown Newcastle Business District in response to a public safety crisis in the heart of our small town. The situation in downtown Newcastle is an emergency. Any one who attended the meeting recognizes that. All one has to do is take a drive through our community to see it. However, the emergency in Newcastle is not one of a kind.

From speaking with and listening to my colleagues here in the House, I know nearly every community across this country faces the same serious challenges. There is a very real public safety crisis in our communities and across this nation: drug use and addiction, crime and vandalism, aggressive behaviour and harassment, and home invasions. A good many Canadians do not feel safe walking the streets, and they do not even feel safe at home with their doors locked.

I would hope that no member of this House thinks that this is a well-done job. I would hope that we can all agree that something needs to change. However, the Liberal government would like Canadians to rest easy. The government was re-elected on promises to axe the carbon tax and negotiate a trade deal with the Prime Minister's good friend Donald Trump, but it has done neither. From where I am standing, it does not look like the Liberals have a real plan to honour their promises to Canadians.

What is the Liberal Party's solution to the public safety crisis in this country? It wants to make it harder for people to get money from a bank machine and easier for the government to open people's mail.

Bill C-2 would do little to address the very real problems facing our nation, but it would get the government recognition with the World Economic Forum. Tone-deaf does not even begin to describe it. It is no wonder that the Liberal government has failed to get a trade deal with our largest and best trading partner, the United States. The Liberal government has not addressed the very legitimate concerns that the U.S. government has raised over crime in this country and its export across our border to the United States. It is in this bill, in black and white: The Liberal government's response to the flow of illegal drugs and weapons across our border is to make it easier, more streamlined, for asylum seekers to enter the United States and avoid the proper means of legitimate immigration. The bill would even provide asylum seekers with government support to navigate our system.

The bill would go on to allow government to keep a closer eye on our internet search history. For 10 years now, Conservatives have warned that Liberal soft-on-crime policies put Canadians in danger. We warned that fentanyl would rip through our towns; the Liberals did not listen. Now crime is up, drug deaths are up, and the Liberals are doubling down. This is one Canadian who is starting to think that when it comes to the complex challenges faced by our country, the Prime Minister does not even know whether to sit or wind his watch. I have to wonder whether the government does not know what it is doing or knows exactly what it is doing.

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It is becoming more difficult to give the Liberals the benefit of the doubt. Are they making well-intentioned bad decisions? Could they make this many bad decisions in a row, or does the bill reveal the vile contempt that the urban elite have for hard-working rural Canadians? The same contempt, voiced by Ruth Marshall from the University of Toronto last week, blocked this House from observing a moment of silence for a young father murdered in Utah last week for believing in God and encouraging others to do the same.

In June, the Liberals rushed this bill into the House and dressed it up with a tough name, the "strong borders act". The name is strong, but the bill is not. It is weak where it must be strong, and even worse, it is heavy-handed where it ought to respect the freedom of ordinary Canadians. Conservatives believe in real law and order, common-sense law and order, and that is why we oppose the bill. We will back any measure that truly stops drugs, guns and violence from infecting our communities, but I will not support legislation that would unnecessarily trample on the rights of law-abiding citizens.

Where is bail reform? The bill would do nothing to stop the catch and release of criminals in our communities. I can say what my constituents think. In Renous, Doaktown, Nauwigewauk, Chipman or Minto, if someone sells poison to our kids, they belong behind bars or in the ground. If the government does not quickly address the crisis situation, things will only get worse.

● (1245)

There are no mandatory jail terms for fentanyl traffickers in this bill, no new mandatory sentences for criminals who use guns. The bill does not demonstrate strength; it embraces weakness. While it would fail to get tough on real criminals, it would reach too far into the lives of ordinary people. It would let government agencies open our mail. It would force Internet companies to hand over our Google search engine results without a warrant. It would even take aim at the cash in our pockets.

Canadians need to know that Conservatives believe in the free market. Cash means choice, and choice means freedom. It is not for Ottawa to decide how a grandmother in Red Bank buys her groceries, but this is how the Liberal government works. It is why I was elected by my constituents, so that I would speak about it in the House. The Liberal government ignores a problem until it explodes; then, instead of a simple fix directed at the problem, it uses legislative tricks to further a globalist agenda at the expense of Canadians' freedoms.

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To my mind, the bill is just more of the downtown Toronto crowd telling rural Canadians how to live, without the faintest idea of life where a handshake is still a deal and a man is measured by his word. I, for one, will not support the bill. I will fight for a Canada that is safe and free, and it does appear that I have a fight on my hands. I believe that criminals should face real consequences and that law-abiding people should keep the freedoms that our grandfathers fought and died for on beaches.

• (1250)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo the comments that my colleague from Winnipeg North mentioned around co-operation and making sure that we are listening to our constituents and the people who sent us to the House.

The hon. member mentioned earlier that we promised Canadians we were going to remove the carbon tax, and he said that we did not. That is misleading, and that is not co-operation. Canadian voters, including Conservative voters, want us to co-operate. They want the House to function for the business of Canadians.

Can the member comment on how he is going to commit to making sure that we move on the things that Canadians sent us to do in the House?

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, it is no small wonder that the crisis in our communities and across our nation is getting worse. I mentioned last week that there was an emergency meeting in my riding called by the downtown Newcastle Business District. In addition to myself were provincial members, the mayor and the chief of police.

No one in the crowd or on the stage suggested that if the government could just search our Internet history, the crisis would improve. No one suggested that if anyone had less cash in their pockets, there would be less drugs on the street. The government is so blind to its own ideology and agenda that it is punishing law-abiding Canadians and doing nothing that is actually required to fix the problems that have been broken for a decade of the Liberal agenda.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on his speech. I have a question for him.

I was a bit taken aback during the spring parliamentary session. We were used to the Conservatives being hyper aggressive all the time, raring for a fight, when suddenly they became the muscle for the Liberal government in the context of Bill C-5. Closure was imposed and we barely had any time to study the bill in committee. Today, all sorts of developments and consequences have come out of adopting Bill C-5, which has become law.

Can my colleague tell me whether the Conservatives plan a repeat of what they did with Bill C-5 or are they thinking of following the Bloc Québécois's lead and acting like responsible parliamentarians who properly study bills that fundamentally change our society, before working for the Liberals?

[English]

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have laid out real solutions. We do not need to hire a team of university professors to

sort this out. All the Liberals need to do is listen and dig the dirt out of their ears; hire thousands more border agents and give CBSA power to patrol our entire border, not just official crossings; install high-powered scanners at every crossing and shipping port to catch drugs, guns and stolen cars before they ever reach the streets; track who leaves the country so deportees cannot simply disappear; end catch-and-release bail and house arrest for violent offenders and scrap the so-called multi-murder discount in sentencing; and do it all while protecting the privacy and freedoms of everyday Canadians.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. Before I begin, I want to give a shout-out to someone who has given me a great deal of help, and that is George Marko. I thank George for everything.

To my hon. colleague, one thing I have been struck by is that the Liberals seem to be tripping over their own agenda. They say they want to strengthen our border, and then they put all of these superfluous things in the bill, things that do not seem to be constitutional or, at least, are marginal at best.

I wonder if my colleague would agree that if the Liberals really wanted to get something done quickly, they would look at what is reasonable, balancing law and order and balancing human rights, civil rights, as our charter guarantees.

• (1255)

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, we will back any part of this bill that would truly protect our borders and help police officers do their jobs, but we will not sign a blank cheque for a government that confuses heavy-handed intrusion with real security. Safety without freedom is not safety at all.

Common sense says we can keep our borders tight and our streets safe without Ottawa dictating how to pay for our groceries and at the farmers' market. This is common sense. If the Liberals do not understand it, then they can hold my beer and let us get to work.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the issue of misleading information. We listen to Conservatives, and they give us the impression that letter carriers could walk around and start opening up Canadians' mail; it is just not true through this legislation. This is not true. In fact, there would be a requirement to get a warrant.

It would deal with mailing fentanyl to communities. Is that not a good thing?

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Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, where is it in the legislation? It says “suspicious”; suspicious is an open-ended word, without a warrant. It makes no sense.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I look across Saskatoon West, past the shopfronts along 22nd Street, and the family homes and small businesses that built the west end of Saskatoon, I see the real cost of 10 years of Liberal failures on crime, drugs and immigration. The government broke these systems, and Bill C-2 is its frantic omnibus attempt to look tough at a podium while ducking accountability at home. It stuffed sweeping surveillance powers in a de facto war on cash into a border bill, then dares ordinary people to swallow the lot. That might work for Ottawa insiders, but it does not work for folks in Confederation Park, Meadowgreen, Mount Royal, Montgomery Place and every neighbourhood in Saskatoon West that wants safe streets and a fair shot.

Let us start where my constituents live today, with local safety. In our city, there were 13 homicides in 2023, 14 in 2024, and by Labour Day this year, only two-thirds of the way through the year, there were already six people slain. Those are not statistics. They are families reeling and a community on edge. Assaults are up this year. Sexual assaults and violations are up. Most alarming is that there have been 818 weapons charges brought forward in the first eight months of this year. These are not isolated spikes. They reflect a Saskatchewan trend line that has gone the wrong way under a Liberal government.

Since 2015, violent firearms offences in Saskatchewan are up 206%. Extortion is up over 600%. Even motor vehicle theft is higher than it was. These crimes, more often than not, are committed by repeat offenders out on bail or who have had their sentences severely reduced.

Saskatoon police chief McBride summed it up this way. He said, “all of the intervention work that police tried to accomplish through holding them accountable, utilizing legislation is for naught...it is a struggle every day for us with repeat offenders.”

That is what families in Saskatoon West feel every day, in their communities, in their driveways and outside their corner stores. They feel that, whatever happens, the revolving door of criminals will keep going due to the Liberals' soft-on-crime agenda.

While we fight to keep our streets safe, the opioid disaster continues to devastate our province. The Saskatchewan Coroners Service recorded eight deaths by fentanyl poisoning in 2016. That number peaked at 272 in 2021 and was still 252 in 2023. However, last year, it spiked again to 383 deaths, making it a record year, even outstripping the COVID years. What has it been over the first eight months of 2025? It is a whopping 330 deaths already, well on pace to have the most deaths in the history of our province. These numbers are not elsewhere or in theory. They are our neighbours, our coworkers and our kids. If members want a picture of what Ottawa's failed approach looks like on the ground, they can find Health Canada safe supply warnings taped outside a pharmacy on 22nd Street right in our riding. That is how close the crisis is.

There is hope. The solutions are obvious by now: repeal Bills C-5 and C-75 to ensure repeat offenders get jail and not bail and focus our care on a recovery model rather than on keeping people in a

perpetual state of addiction. Is that what we are debating today? Sadly, it is not.

What exactly is Bill C-2? The bill has elements to improve border tools, such as compelling export-side co-operation with CBSA, authorizing security patrols and improving interdiction of contraband in the mail. Conservatives can work with that. We all want to stop guns, drugs and stolen cars, but the bill also veers into bundled surveillance powers, a cash crackdown and a political rewrite of asylum rules. Bill C-2 slaps on a blanket cap for cash transactions over \$10,000 without offering evidence for why a federal ban, rather than record-keeping, is needed. In Saskatoon West, seniors, small contractors and family-run shops still use cash for perfectly legitimate reasons. Yes, there are abuses of cash transactions as well, but instead of banning cash, we need better tools to stop crimes with cash. Otherwise, the government's overreach will hit hardest on the little guy in places like Saskatoon.

Then there is the privacy hit. The bill would create new pathways for information demands and cross-border data grabs, lowering thresholds for access to subscriber and transmission data. The Supreme Court has recognized a reasonable expectation of privacy in subscriber information and IP addresses, yet the government buries a workaround in a border bill and tells Saskatoon families to trust it. This legislation would create a warrantless runaround for the police to invade our fibre optic networks, something the Liberals hid deep in this 140-page omnibus bill.

Regarding immigration, the Liberals broke a system that used to work. Canada's system was the envy of the world. Countries would come to Canada to see our system so they might implement it in their own countries. In the last 10 years, the Liberal government has broken almost our entire immigration system to the point where those people are no longer coming to see how we do it, but rather how not to do it, so they do not wreck their own.

Government Orders

● (1300)

This, of course, is not the fault of immigrants. Immigrants just used the system that was given to them. This was purely the government's fault. The good news is that it can be fixed, and we know how to fix it.

The Liberals did not think that there should be limits on temporary residents, and guess what. The number of temporary residents exploded to over three million people, nearly 7.5% of our total population. This rapid uncontrolled population growth has led to obvious shortages in housing and jobs, and put enormous strains on our health care and education systems.

Employers turned the temporary foreign worker program into a wage suppression crutch. It was supposed to be for hard-to-fill agricultural jobs, but it ballooned into restaurants, hotels and just about everywhere else. We propose restoring it back to an ag-only policy because, in the first six months of this year alone, the Liberals issued 105,000 temporary foreign worker permits, despite promising a cap of 82,000, which flooded entry-level markets while Saskatoon students struggled to find summer jobs.

That is not compassion. It is a policy that leaves local youth and newcomers alike worse off. Folks in Saskatoon West feel this on both ends. Employers are begging for skilled trades and reliable workers, while at the same time, high school grads and polytechnic students in Saskatoon West tell me that they cannot get their first job, because Liberals allowed a temporary program to become a permanent substitute for Canadian labour. That is on this government.

Let me be clear about what Bill C-2 misses and what Saskatoon West needs.

The first issue is bail and sentencing. The Liberals' catch-and-release approach failed. They repealed mandatory prison time for serious gun crimes and drug trafficking, and instead expanded house arrest for offences such as sexual assault and kidnapping. Instead of jail for serious offences, criminals are told to stay at home. How often can police check up on criminals at home? We can bet that these thugs are coming and going as normal while they serve out their sentences. The results are obvious in the stats and on our streets. It is time to bring back jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders and restore mandatory prison times for the worst crimes.

The second big issue is fentanyl. Bill C-2 tweaks the current law around drug precursors, which is fine, but it does nothing about the cartel-level producers and traffickers who treat Canadian penalties as just the cost of doing business. Common-sense Conservatives will propose targeted constitutional life sentence provisions for those producing or trafficking fentanyl. That is what a real deterrent looks like, and that is what Saskatoon West deserves.

The third issue is border competence without civil liberties overreach. We must upgrade scanners at crossings and ports, extend CBSA powers along the entire border and track departures so that deportees do not disappear. These are real tools that would have real results, all while protecting the privacy rights of law-abiding Saskatoon families and small businesses.

Here are our common-sense solutions to deal with these issues. One is to fix the border and implement border and enforcement tools that actually help CBSA but stay away from the surveillance back doors and cash bans.

Two is to have jail and not bail to end the catch-and-release for repeat violent offenders, restore mandatory prison for serious gun and hard drug crimes and end house arrest for violent offences. Our community deserves nothing less.

Three is to hammer fentanyl kingpins with life sentences for organized crime production and trafficking with a clear 40 milligram trafficking threshold. We need to flood the zone with treatment and recovery, not failed safe supply experiments.

Last, we must secure fair immigration that puts Canadians first and ends the wage-suppressing temporary foreign worker scheme while keeping a narrowly focused agricultural stream. We need to clear the backlogs and put Saskatoon youth and Canadian workers first in line for Canadian jobs.

The government will say that Bill C-2 is about strong borders, but for people in Saskatoon West, strong borders mean less fentanyl on our streets, not more surveillance in their inbox; more CBSA capacity, not more Ottawa control over family finances; and an immigration system that works for Canada, not for corporate lobbyists and political theatre in Washington.

I like some elements of Bill C-2, which are basically the elements through which the Liberals are trying desperately to undo the ideas that they themselves implemented. However, the bill is a large omnibus bill that includes typical Liberal overreach that I cannot support. I want to see immediate help for the front lines, the CBSA officers, Saskatoon police and community safety partners, while I fight the government's overreach and demand real sentencing reform.

At the end of the day, my job is to deliver for families along 22nd Street, for the seniors in Montgomery, for the small shops, churches and little league teams all across Saskatoon, and that means a Conservative government that will strengthen our borders, protect civil liberties, destroy the scourge of fentanyl and keep our streets safe by keeping criminals in jail. We can make that happen.

• (1305)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member spent a good deal of his time talking about an issue that was part of the Liberal Party's platform. During the election, just five months ago, we got a new Prime Minister. We had more new Liberal MPs elected than MPs for any other political party in the House. At the end of the day, we have accomplished a great deal over the last five months, including tax breaks, building one Canadian economy, and so forth. Bail legislation was also part of our platform, and the Prime Minister has been very clear in that he will be introducing the legislation as early as this fall for at least a couple of parts of it.

Can we anticipate that the Conservative Party will co-operate in trying to get some of this legislation, whether it is on bail or today's bill, into a committee?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, it is great to hear that the Liberals are finally listening to what Canadians have been telling them for 10 years. However, we have seen over and over again a lot of talk and ideas, but the action is not there. Maybe they will introduce something, I do not know. We have not seen it. This is a pattern we have grown to become very used to on this side of the House over the last 10 years. I might note that most of the members on that side in positions of authority are the same. It is the same government with the same track record as before.

Conservatives are happy to work on anything that makes sense and that we can support, but I want to see some real action from the government.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to put my question to one of my colleague's colleagues who spoke earlier. I did not get an answer, so I will repeat my question.

As I have said several times today, a disproportionate number of asylum seekers make their claims in Quebec, which puts a lot of pressure on our resources. We already have an immigration crisis and a housing crisis, but we also have a resource crisis. Unfortunately, the government has not yet taken meaningful action to ensure the fair distribution of asylum seekers.

Government Orders

I would like the Conservative Party's opinion. Should asylum seekers be distributed fairly among the provinces, or should Quebec alone take on these challenges and this burden?

[English]

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. The most important thing we need to do as a country is to make sure that we have the best controls we can on asylum seekers so that we are not attracting people. Former prime minister Trudeau famously said that Canada was open and invited people to come to Canada. Guess what. People came. Of course they did.

It is really important that we make sure we have systems in place that can quickly process people and do not do things that unnecessarily draw people to Canada who should not be coming here because they have perfectly good places to live. Yes, we can handle real asylum seekers. We have a system that can absorb them, and they should be absorbed right across the country.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on another front, dealing with the issue of individuals in Canada, let us say, for an extended period of time on temporary visas, does the member have any thoughts of his own as to whether someone, for example, who has been here for over a year, would be able to claim refugee status if they were here visiting a student or whatever else it might be?

• (1310)

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague bringing up the issue of temporary residence in Canada because this is a major issue right now in our country. The data from the member's own party shows that well over 7% of the population right now is temporary. This has been totally caused by the government's lack of attention to this area and its encouragement for people to come to Canada, with absolutely no oversight, no controls and no limits. Of course people came. People will use the system that is given to them and now, all of a sudden, we have a problem that the government is finally waking up to.

This is entirely the fault of the Liberal government, something that should have been completely preventable and should have allowed Canadians who live here to have access to health care, housing and jobs. That is something that has to be corrected, and the government is fully at fault for that.

Government Orders

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, September 5, the RCMP seized over 120 grams of fentanyl, nearly 50 grams of methamphetamine, over 150 grams of crack cocaine and a loaded prohibited handgun in a family neighbourhood in my home of Campbell River. Police executed the search and seizure after a lengthy drug trafficking investigation. Inspector Jeff Preston, the officer in charge, said, “Campbell River is experiencing one of the highest rates of overdose deaths in the province and we’re doing everything we can to remove these toxic drugs from our streets.”

It is true that the RCMP in my riding is doing everything they can to remove dangerous drugs from our streets, but 10 years of Liberal governance has made it harder for the RCMP to do their job. Instead, the government has made it easier for drugs and illegal guns to be trafficked across the Canada-U.S. border, and it has emboldened criminals by entrenching Liberal catch-and-release revolving-door policies throughout Canada's justice system.

Today, this House is considering Bill C-2, a piece of legislation whose purpose the Liberal minister responsible has said is to, among other things, combat organized crime and fentanyl. That is an admirable goal and one that we as parliamentarians could all get behind. Unfortunately, however, this bill does not address the many reasons we have had such massive increases in violent crime and overdose deaths under the Liberal government over the past 10 years.

First is the issue of crime. Forget major cities like Vancouver or Toronto. Just in my riding, whether it is Campbell River, Powell River or Courtenay, every week there is a new story about someone being shot or stabbed, having to fend off a home invasion or having their business broken into. Crime is getting worse, and here are the facts to back that up. Since 2015, violent crime has increased by 50% and homicides have increased by 27%, 34% of which, by the way, were committed by a criminal on some sort of a release like bail.

We have to be clear. The dramatic increase we have seen in crime and disorder is not the result of a bill like Bill C-2 not yet being passed. Rather, it is due directly to legislation passed by the Liberals and supported by the NDP over the past decade. Legislation like Bill C-75 and Bill C-5 have reduced jail time for serious offenders and granted near-automatic bail for career criminals.

We have all heard the stories as a result of these policies about violent random offenders who are released from custody only to commit more violence on our streets. It is part of a tragic miscarriage of justice happening right across this country, but it hits a little differently when it happens in our own backyard.

Lewis Park is a popular gathering place for residents of the Co-mox Valley. Kids play in the water park, seniors go to classes at the community centre and, apparently, repeat violent offenders prey on an unsuspecting public. At least, that is the story of Serge Melancon, who came to Lewis Park with his wife, a 64-year-old double amputee, to use a handicap shower in the middle of the day during their road trip vacation.

As Serge was about to leave the driveway, there was a knock on his window. It was an unknown man who proceeded to concoct a

story about why he needed to borrow Serge's phone, before suddenly opening the door to Serge's vehicle and punching him repeatedly in the head. The assault was so vicious and so unexpected that Serge was hardly able to fight back, sustaining injuries to his face. As Serge was dragged out of the car and lay on the ground, the assailant fled with his phone, and a crowd began to gather. The police then arrived on the scene, later identifying the attacker as Melvin Teagai, a trained boxer. Unsurprisingly, Serge was then told by police that the attacker was already known to them. In other words, he was a repeat violent offender.

Unfortunately, the story of Serge is one that is all too common in both big cities and small towns right across Canada. In fact, I have noticed that the only people who seem to be punished under the Liberal government are those who actually work for a living and follow the law. There is no better example than the law-abiding firearms owners who have been demonized and targeted by their own government, while at the same time the Liberals have reduced prison sentences for those convicted of illegally smuggling firearms across the border from the United States. It is the very same border, I might add, that they now claim they want to desperately secure.

The Liberals also claim they want to get tough on fentanyl and other illegal drugs with this bill. Well, let us look at their record on that.

● (1315)

Since 2015, more than 50,000 Canadians have died from drug overdoses in Canada. That is more Canadians dead than died in all of World War II. These are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, and sons and daughters who have all had their lives tragically cut short.

What has the Liberals' policy been when it has come to deadly opioids like fentanyl that have wreaked so much havoc and caused so much death? First, in my province of B.C., the Liberals decriminalized hard drugs, including crystal meth, crack cocaine and, yes, even fentanyl. It is a policy that remains in place to this day, which means that at the same time that they are claiming they want to take the fentanyl situation seriously, which we all do, their own policy, which recklessly decriminalized that very drug, remains in place. The Liberals then used taxpayer money to flood the streets with a highly addictive and deadly opioid called hydromorphone, or Dilaudid, while marketing it to our young people as safe supply, all as part of their plan known as harm reduction. This bill would leave all of those policies in place as well.

They say the definition of insanity is to keep doing the same thing and expecting a different result. It is a phrase that I unfortunately have to use all too often with the current government. If we want to actually solve the addictions crisis and want to combat the scourge of fentanyl and other hard drugs, how about instead of handing them out for free, we use that money to get people into treatment and recovery and return them to being healthy, productive members of our society once again? For those who are trafficking these drugs, who are trafficking fentanyl, it is time we treat them like the mass murderers they are, with mandatory life sentences for those profiting off the death and misery of so many of our fellow Canadians. However, instead of dealing with these substantive issues, the Liberals are scrambling with an omnibus bill that would not only fall short of protecting Canadians, but infringe on their unassailable individual freedoms.

The Conservatives have always advocated for a secure border with greater investments, resources and personnel for the CBSA, the Canada Border Services Agency, so it can prevent the flow of illegal drugs and guns coming across the border into Canada. That is just common sense. We know that securing the border means an increased number of border agents, patrol equipment and enhanced security measures and technology.

The major concerns that I have with this bill, aside from the failure to address the real issues and the root problems driving the violent crime and addictions crises in this country, are surrounding privacy infringements involving the warrantless search of the mail of Canadians and digital government overreach.

First, Bill C-2 would amend the Canada Post Corporation Act to permit the search, seizure, detention or retention of any post items and would empower Canada Post to open all mail. This is directly against Canadians' right to privacy and would allow Canada Post to open mail without proper oversight, while also removing, which is actually hard to believe, any liability from those who abuse this newly granted authority. Here is the truth: Canadians do not want government looking into their private parcels and letters. To permit such action would be a gross violation of the individual freedoms that all Canadians have come to expect.

This same pattern of erosion of civil liberties is repeated in parts 14, 15 and 16 of this legislation. Bill C-2 would allow the government to create back doors for government bodies to access the private data of Canadians, again without warrants. In Part 16, the bill opens the door for the government to supply financial institutions with personal information, and banks would be authorized to collect and use that personal information without an individual's knowledge or consent, all based merely on government suspicion. This is essentially the same power the government granted to itself using the Emergencies Act during the COVID-19 protests back in 2022, which it then proceeded to immediately and dangerously abuse.

All told, as it stands, Bill C-2 would accomplish virtually nothing on the major issues of crime and fentanyl, which it purports to address. The failed Liberal policies of Bill C-5, Bill C-75 and drug decriminalization would all remain in place, while new infringements on the individual freedoms of Canadians would be thoughtlessly introduced. As of today, Bill C-2 is a poorly written bill, and without significant changes and revisions, it would accomplish lit-

tle toward the safety and security of Canadians, while further eroding the freedoms and privacy that Canadians hold dear.

• (1320)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of comments I take exception to, especially ones dealing with the issue of fentanyl that is put into envelopes and mailed out and the legal obligation for Canada Post to deliver that mail. To deal with drugs like fentanyl and how Canada Post is being utilized, we have put responsible clauses in the legislation that will in fact make a difference.

I would ultimately argue that the legislation as a whole has the merit to go to committee, where members opposite could evaluate it, debate it and propose amendments. Does the member believe there are aspects of the legislation he would support so we can ultimately see it go to a committee?

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Speaker, first, on the issue of fentanyl, I find it a bit rich that the government is claiming these new infringements on the individual freedoms of Canadians are all about combatting the scourge of fentanyl in society. This is a government that funds the handing out of fentanyl for free. This is a government that decriminalized fentanyl in my home province of British Columbia. This is a government that has overseen the largest increase of overdose deaths in the history of this country. As I said in my opening remarks, it is more than 50,000 Canadians, more than the number of Canadians who died in the Second World War.

If we want to get tough on fentanyl, if we want to get tough on hard drugs in this country, we do not have to do it by infringing on the freedoms of Canadians. There are lots of different options for doing that. It is a large bill. Of course, there are elements in it that are good, but there is so much that is cause for concern.

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member has been an advocate for getting hard drugs off the streets. He has been to my riding, to Fort St. John, to talk specifically about this really challenging issue for our communities in B.C.

The Liberal government is in its 11th year of governing this country. It has attacked law-abiding firearms owners on a regular basis, as the member mentioned. It has also allowed drugs to flow onto the streets, which, as he mentioned, have killed thousands of Canadians as a result of overdoses. Is the member confident that the Liberal government, in its 11th year of governing Canada, is about to change its ways?

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Speaker, I am definitely not confident that the government is going to change its ways. As the member pointed out, it seems that under the Liberals, previously supported by the NDP, the only ones who ever get punished are those who actually work for a living, pay their taxes and follow the law.

Government Orders

As the member pointed out, law-abiding firearm owners are the perfect example of that. The government is using taxpayer money to confiscate the private property of these Canadians, who have never committed a crime and who are statistically some of the least likely Canadians to ever commit a crime, and is at the same time reducing sentences for those who are illegally smuggling firearms across the border from the United States. This is the very same border the government now claims it is so desperate to secure.

• (1325)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my first opportunity to address the new member for North Island—Powell River.

The Conservatives, who backed the Liberal measures through May and June, seem to have decided that now is the time to draw the line. I am glad it is on Bill C-2, because Bill C-2 should be completely withdrawn and rethought. I would like to ask the hon. member if he thinks the Conservative Party would ever again back a programming motion such as the one used on Bill C-5, which denied us a chance to properly study the bill.

Aaron Gunn: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to future legislation. We are going to look at these issues one by one. Obviously, with Bill C-2, we see very serious concerns, as it involves the infringement of the individual freedoms of all Canadians.

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I rise in the House after the summer recess. As always, I want to thank the constituents of Niagara West for sending me to Ottawa to be their voice in this incredible place. I am humbled that, after more than 21 years, I was once again granted the honour of their trust.

Today, we are discussing the government's bill, Bill C-2. For my constituents who may be watching, Bill C-2's formal name is an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures. The short title of this bill is the strong borders act. Does this bill really live up to its name? It sure has generated a lot of attention from many corners: academia, civil society groups and other stakeholders.

Let us delve into it a little and look at some recent history to understand what the Liberals are trying to do with it.

First and foremost, I believe my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would agree that Conservatives believe in law and order. We have always stood up for common-sense measures to keep Canadians safe. I do not think there is much debate from any party when it comes to this issue. It is simple. Conservatives care about Canadians and their safety. We would like to see legislation to that end, whether it is presented from our side or otherwise.

What is important here is to inform those watching us today that for the past decade, Conservatives have been urging the Liberal government to reverse their failed policies and restore safety to our communities. Most people who were paying attention to media coverage during the last campaign know that crime was a big topic. Countless examples were seen on TV and first-hand in our communities, which show us that things have gotten much worse over the

last decade, so much so that many Canadians are afraid for their safety just walking in their neighbourhoods.

Whether Liberals admit it or not, with respect to crime, things have gotten out of control. Speaking of campaigns and crime, I think more than four million people saw my post on what happened in Grimsby during the last campaign. Armed robbers rammed a pickup truck through the doors of a jewellery store in the middle of the day in downtown Grimsby, a once-quiet, small community where things like this just do not happen. What is even more shocking is that this armed robbery was not the first. In fact, it was the third time in just three months the same jewellery store was targeted. Imagine that. This is Grimsby we are talking about.

The crime wave has shaken our small community to the core and has opened a lot of conversations about what has taken place under the Liberals for the last 10 long years. I can honestly say that this issue was a major factor in the high voter turnout in my riding just days later, on election day. People have had enough not just in Niagara West but also through all corners of this country.

The Liberals are attempting to respond with this bill, but it seems incomplete. They seem rushed to do something they have not really thought through. It seems like they are scrambling to introduce a bill, any bill, just to say they are doing something. The bill is too wide-ranging and, in the end, it falls short of protecting Canadians while overreaching in other areas. Like other recent government legislation, we will support some parts of it, but it needs work. When something makes sense, we will acknowledge it and we will work collaboratively to fix the flaws and make it even better. We are willing to do that with all parties, not just the Liberals.

Allow me to mention the parts of the bill that concern me and many of my colleagues, as well.

First, the bill does not address bail reform. We have seen the consequences of the catch-and-release system, which causes havoc in many communities throughout our country. Criminals are arrested for what is usually not their first, second or even third crime, but they are right back on the street the same day. They reoffend shortly after and the cycle continues.

Let me tell members what happened in Welland recently. Welland is a small community just outside of my riding. As a matter of fact, my colleague here in the House, the member for Niagara South, represents this community. A horrific crime took place. It was something out of a nightmare. In fact, it is probably any parent's nightmare.

A few weeks ago, Daniel Senecal, a dangerous pedophile, was charged with the sexual assault of a three-year-old girl. He broke into the home after the family fell asleep and committed this horrendous crime against a three-year-old toddler. Senecal was charged with the aggravated sexual assault of a minor, choking, breaking and entering, and sexual interference. I will spare everyone the details of the injuries this monster inflicted upon this poor child. Daniel Senecal is a despicable pedophile who should never see freedom again. He destroyed the life of a little girl, her family and many others.

However, the story does not end there. This monster recently got out of a one-year stint in jail for sexually assaulting a 12-year-old boy just four years ago. He received 18 months for sexually assaulting a little boy but got out early.

When I read this for the first time, I could not believe it. I had to go to another news source to verify that the sentence was actually written correctly in the first article, and it was. I felt total shock, disappointment and outrage. The 12-year-old boy's mother was also outraged that the person charged in the attack on this three-year-old girl only served one year and now lives a short distance away.

• (1330)

Are we noticing a pattern of crime here, a pattern of lax criminal laws? Are we addressing this with Bill C-2? My colleague from Niagara South has started a petition, and I encourage members to reach out to him at his constituency office to get more details and maybe sign this petition, as well.

In addition to this idiotic leniency for monsters, we also still have a catch-and-release scheme that is alive and well for drug dealers and traffickers. It is alive and well for criminals who are trafficking fentanyl and firearms, and using our porous border to victimize Canadians. What most Canadians would be shocked to hear, and I hope that if they are watching they will remember this, is that there are still no mandatory times for fentanyl traffickers.

Fentanyl is an awful drug. We see devastating and frightening effects just a few blocks from this place. Just two milligrams, which is the size of a grain of salt, can kill a person. That is why our Conservative team wants to impose mandatory life sentences on anyone involved in the trafficking, production and distribution of over 40 milligrams of fentanyl. Forty milligrams could kill 20 people. That is called mass murder. If someone is willing to traffic and distribute this poison, they should never see freedom again. Bill C-2 does not address this issue, and it should. We need to fix it so that it does.

Bill C-2 also provides no new mandatory prison terms for gangsters who use guns to commit crimes. If we just turn on the news, we can see what is going on with home invasions and carjackings by criminals who use guns to commit crimes. It is happening daily and in the most brazen ways that one could even think of. Once again, Bill C-2 does not address this issue, and we need to fix it.

Bill C-2 also does not address sentencing for serious offences. House arrest is still permissible under the current system for some of the most serious offences. How can we, in good conscience, allow this to continue when we see the devastation it causes so many folks around the country? We need to fix it, and we need to fix it now.

Government Orders

On another theme, let us talk about the topic that is top of mind for many constituents: the consistent government attacks on our civil liberties. It was a frequent issue at the door during the campaign. I received emails and phone calls from folks worried about the bill's effect on our civil liberties. They are deeply concerned that it allows authorities to open mail without oversight. This is a major violation of privacy that my constituents consider unacceptable.

Bill C-2 also compels Internet companies to hand over private information and grants authorities warrantless searches, another violation of privacy. I cannot tell the House how many discussions I have had about this. People are worried.

People are also alarmed by the government's efforts to limit the use of cash. Cash remains a critical part of our economy. Many seniors in Niagara West and in rural communities like mine, as well as small businesses, rely on using cash. All I can say to folks who are emailing and phoning us, worried about this bill, is that it seems to fit the pattern of the Liberals' unquenchable thirst for more government control and further government overreach.

Now is a good time to bring up our Conservative record on this issue. We have consistently fought for practical, effective policies that secure our borders, protect communities and uphold Canadians' fundamental rights and freedoms. We have proposed adding thousands of border agents. We have proposed extending CBSA powers along the entire border, not just at crossings. We have proposed installing border surveillance towers, as well as a truck-mounted drone system to spot border incursions. We have forwarded a plan to install high-powered scanners at all major land crossings and shipping ports. By the way, for those who do not know, these scanners can see through the walls of vehicle containers to spot drugs, guns and stolen cars. We have also proposed a plan to track departures, so government officials know which deportees are in Canada illegally.

Government Orders

We have also put a plan forward to toughen penalties for repeat violent offenders, which the Liberals are resisting. I have no idea why they are resisting this. It is such a common-sense policy, yet here we are. Our plan also includes ending catch-and-release bail and house arrest for violent criminals, other common-sense policies the Liberals are against. We want to eliminate the multiple murder discount when sentencing offenders. We propose prioritizing treatment over government drug distribution to support battling addictions.

Last but not least, we have been champions of rights and freedoms, freedom of speech and fearlessly defending Canadians' civil liberties. Our plan is one of pragmatism. We will always put Canadians first by taking public safety issues seriously and protecting Canadians' rights. It is time for the Liberals to admit they have majorly screwed up in the last 10 years when it comes to protecting Canadians. As our leader has said, please copy our plan. We do not mind. We all care about Canadians and their safety. We want people to once again feel safe in their communities, so let us make it happen. Let us work on this together. Let us fix this bill. Let us make it better. Let us work towards a safer Canada.

• (1335)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-2 does not deal with the issue of bail reform, a commitment that the Prime Minister made. If it dealt with bail reform, we would have criticisms from across the way saying that it should have been separate legislation. The good news is that we are going to see that separate legislation this fall. Members should know that by now.

The member also made the assertion that the Conservative Party always believed in strong borders. In reality, when the leader of the Conservative Party sat around the cabinet table, he cut—

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.

I am new to the chamber. I thought there was supposed to be a question, and the comment was to the member who gave the—

The Deputy Speaker: I believe the parliamentary secretary was getting to his question.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives, when the leader of the Conservative Party was in government and sat at the cabinet table, literally cut money out of the budget for border control. Contrast that with this government, which has invested well over \$1 billion, or close to \$1.3 billion, to have hundreds of new border and RCMP officers. It seems to be an interesting contrast.

Does the member not see any hypocrisy in some of the statements that have been made?

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we seem to notice over and over again, and that my colleague just mentioned in the last speech, is that there seems to be this whole issue of not being tough on crime, which is also not being tough on borders and

making sure it is porous. We hear over and over again about how illegal guns flow from the border, yet the government spends most of its time going after law-abiding gun owners, hunters and fishermen. My good colleague right in front of me here has been a champion for the sports shooting community, something our party has always been. We realize that it is violent repeat offenders who cause the majority of issues in this country. This is just indicative that all these things are the same: bail and borders.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are debating a 130-page bill to strengthen border security, but the government is still refusing to act on something that the Canada Border Services Agency union is demanding, namely the right to act between ports of entry. The customs union has been clear about this demand, which does not even require a legislative change. A simple regulatory change is all it would take.

Why is the government refusing to give officers this flexibility when doing so could bolster efforts to fight fentanyl, contraband and vehicle smuggling?

All they are asking for is a regulatory change.

[English]

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to providing resources for our border security, this is something that is very important. It was the Conservative government under Harper that provided firearms for a majority of the border services people. Any chance that we have to give them more ability to do their job is always something our Conservative Party will do.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have noticed a trend with the Liberal government, where they identify a legitimate problem, but its solution only targets the people who are not perpetuating that problem.

An example is money laundering. There is no argument from us that this is the real issue, but banning law-abiding citizens from transacting in cash is not the answer. Gun crime is a huge issue, in fact even bigger after 10 years of Liberal soft-on-crime policies, but going after law-abiding gun owners is the Liberal's resolution.

I would like my hon. colleague to expand on why only the law-abiding seem to be in the crosshairs of the Liberal government on firearms, cash and many other things.

• (1340)

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, although my hon. colleague is new here, he is catching on very quickly. He has a very good question.

I think that one of the challenges is right in the premise of the question. “Law-abiding” says it all. I think the government feels it is an easy target and goes after people who actually follow the law, take the time to do the safety courses and register their guns to make sure they are doing all the things they need to do within their power. The funny thing is that criminals do not register their guns. It is a crazy thing. It seems that the Liberals can make a whole lot of noise about going after law-abiding citizens because it takes absolutely zero effort. All the law-abiding citizens have already given them the information they need, taken the courses, done what is required from them, joined the clubs, participated in safety and all those types of things. I have not yet seen one criminal who registers their gun.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is asking Parliament to grant Canada Post permission to open letters, mail that Canadians send one another, without a warrant, to protect us from a drug crisis of its own making. Bill C-2 would exempt Canada Post, a Crown agency, from judicial oversight.

Section 8 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees our right to be secured against unreasonable search and seizure. In 1993, in the case *R v. Plant*, the Supreme Court held that such protections are required for the very functioning of our democracy, that the values underlying section 8 are integrity, dignity and autonomy, values that are most precious to humanity. The court held that section 8 protects individual autonomy, where people have the right “to be let alone”, a right “on which the state cannot intrude without permission”.

This is not some Conservative MP saying that; this is what the Supreme Court of Canada said, three blocks away. When the Supreme Court speaks, Parliament must listen.

To conduct a search, the search must be reasonable. In *R v. Collins*, the Supreme Court of Canada, God bless its heart, held that a search is reasonable when it is authorized by law. Unless there are exigent circumstances, section 8 requires authorization for a search. Warrantless searches are presumed to be unreasonable. There may be exigent circumstances where there can be a search without a warrant. For instance, if there is an emergency and it is impractical to obtain a warrant, to preserve evidence when it may disappear or when a police officer's safety is at risk.

The need to open and inspect the inside of envelopes sent by Canada Post does not amount to exigent circumstances. Losing custody of the envelope is of no concern; Canada Post holds on to an envelope. Urgency is of no concern because the damn thing is in the mail. I get mail that was sent to me a month earlier, without a labour disruption.

If Canada Post wants to open my mail, it can go ahead, but it should, please, get permission. It is the custody of the envelope and the lack of urgency that precludes the Crown from proving exigent circumstances. Opening the envelope without judicial oversight cannot be constitutional. Is there a charter violation when a Crown corporation or a peace officer is invited by the Crown corporation to open the envelope? Yes, 100%.

Let us move on to section 1. Can the violation survive? Can the Crown prove on a balance of probabilities that the constitutional infringement is demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic so-

ciety? The verdict is no, of course it cannot. Canada Post can hold on to the envelope, swear an affidavit and see a justice of the peace. If the justice of the peace says yes, then it can open the envelope, but until then, it should stay out of the business of Canadians.

Government Orders

For years, I have been urging Canadians to realize that the Liberal government is engaged in an assault on our civil rights. It is a new bus just like the old bus, but maybe this one is even worse. An assault on our legal rights guaranteed by the charter is an assault on democracy. It is an assault on the House. It is an assault on the courts. Opening mail without judicial oversight is an assault on all Canadians.

I do not understand what is happening to our country. I do not understand how it is that in the last few years, “freedom” has become a dirty word. The Liberals are chipping away at values that our country was founded on.

The state broadcaster, the communications arm of the Liberal Party, gets \$1.5 billion of our money from the Liberals. First it mocks anyone who defends basic civil rights, and then it calls them crazy, fringe or right-wing. When that does not work, it calls them dangerous. I was born in the former Soviet Union. This is precisely what the Soviet Communists did for almost 70 years: mock the opposition, call it crazy and then demonize it.

Do members know how it ends? It ends with labour camps, re-education camps or prison. Ronald Reagan once said that the loss of freedom is only one generation away. He was wrong; the loss of freedom is only one government away. Just when we think it cannot get any worse, along comes the same Liberal government, just with a new Liberal Prime Minister. It wants Parliament to pass a law that a Crown corporation can open people's letters, Christmas cards and bills without a warrant.

● (1345)

The drug crisis is a national tragedy the Liberals created. When I was 20 years old, I lost a friend to heroin overdose. Simon Woods came back from rehab and relapsed. I am going to send a shout-out to my boys. We were his pallbearers. I met countless people throughout my career, lawyers and politicians, who struggled with addiction. I wish I could bring Simon back. I wish I could bring all of them back, but the legislation would not bring any of them back, and the legislation would not change anything but amount to an assault on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Government Orders

We can put the envelope aside and go see a justice of the peace. There is no rush. We would still be able to save Simon's life while preserving the integrity of our democracy and respecting hundreds of years of common law. If there is no urgency, no exigent circumstances, we should obtain a warrant. I ask that we please remove warrantless searches from the bill.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if someone puts some fentanyl in a size 10 envelope and mails it at a post office, Canada Post has a legal obligation to deliver that letter. The legislation would enable a law enforcement officer, not a letter carrier, as long as they have been given the warrant to do so, to open the letter.

Will the member not agree that the principle of what I have stated is a good thing, whether he believes it is in the bill or not? Would he believe that the principle of what I said is a good thing and in the best interests of Canadians?

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, we are not here to debate the fact that there is a lot of trafficking and distribution going through the mail. We will agree to that. The principle of search and seizure must still conform to the charter, and that means that unless there are exigent circumstances, unless there is urgency, unless the evidence can disappear or unless a police officer can get hurt, we have to seek judicial authorization.

That is what the member fails to understand. We agree on the need. We disagree on the fact that we need to abridge constitutional rights to accomplish that need.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the member heard the question. I would ask him to listen very carefully. In principle, if there is a warrant issued so a law enforcement officer can open a letter, would the member not support that? Based on what he is saying, I would assume the answer would be yes. It is kind of like a yes or no question. If the warrant is actually issued so that the police or the law enforcement agency can open the letter, would he not agree that it would be a good thing? If he is serious about fentanyl and trafficking up north and in other areas, and the use of Canada Post as a means to get fentanyl to homes, why would he not agree to that?

• (1350)

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, that is not what is happening in the bill. Again, I do not understand why the member fails to comprehend that this side of the House is in agreement with the fact that there is a national crisis, one that the Liberals in fact created. They can go ahead and open my mail if a justice of the peace says so. That is the only difference. There would be no warrant requirement under the legislation, and that is what we fundamentally object to.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question. We are getting into the details, which is why the Bloc Québécois supports further study of this bill in committee.

We are talking about security, and the concept of security includes the notion of theft.

If it is not feasible to search every container, how can we be sure that these new measures will actually tackle the root causes of theft and will not just be window dressing?

[English]

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, indeed, we on this side of the House want to be reasonable with the government. There are some elements of the bill we sincerely agree with, but we will not sit idly by when we believe that the Liberal government would be abridging constitutional rights without cause.

We do not need to rush, seize and search when we can hold onto the evidence, secure the evidence, not worry about the evidence being lost or damaged, put it aside, maintain the chain of custody, and go ask for judicial oversight. This is something I believe every member of the House who is sworn to preserve our democracy should agree on.

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke a lot about how the government is moving forward very heavy-handedly. This is something I think we have seen as a pattern with the Liberal government, trampling on liberties and freedoms of Canadians in a number of instances.

I would like to know whether the member would like to speak about that more, as well as further about how we see a pattern of the government being soft on crime, whether it is with respect to the legislation before us or the bail system. I would like to know if the member has any other further comments.

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, this morning in the City of Toronto, the city I come from and in which I am blessed to represent one of its riding in the House, a gentleman was running away from another gentleman and was eventually shot. This is a daily occurrence.

As I like to say, the Liberals turned the streets of Toronto into Grand Theft Auto, real-life edition. This is more of the same. This is disregard for the rule of law. It is not just by way of abridgement of constitutional rights; it is also failure to defend the rights of—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member. His time has come to an end.

Before we resume debate, I have to remind the member. At the beginning of his speech, he used a word that a veteran member reminded me would be considered unparliamentary. I just caution members. It is the second day back. Sometimes we get impassioned, or we write down things that can be written but cannot be said. This is just a friendly reminder to members.

Resuming debate, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has about six minutes, and then she will be interrupted for question period and Standing Order 31 statements.

Government Orders

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise here as we resume Parliament to talk to a bill tabled June 3; it is the first time I have had an opportunity to address it in this place. I will not forget this, as I used to practise law myself and practised law on behalf of refugees. I was reading a bill that I understood to be called “the strong borders act” and wondered what all these sections were about changes to the Immigration Act. Why are we making it harder for people to claim refugee status? Will this, in fact, violate our international obligations under the treaties to protect the rights of refugees?

I will back up. Given that I have roughly six minutes at this time and will be able to return to this after a number of other routine events in this place, none of which are routine anymore, I want to say that this is offensive on a number of levels for viewers and fellow parliamentarians. It has been a long time. We get tired of keeping track of Liberal election promises. Maybe the promise from 2015 never meant anything anyway; it has been abused so much. However, I find it offensive to face omnibus bills. Legitimate omnibus bills, by definition, should focus on the same legislative purpose, not multiple legislative purposes.

The bill, in short form, deals with the following separate pieces of legislation: the Customs Act, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Canada Post Corporation Act, the Oceans Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and a number of information-sharing pieces of legislation that appear to be aimed toward preparing Canadian law to allow U.S. security and U.S. law enforcement agencies greater access to Canadians' private information.

As I read it at the time, on June 3, I was alarmed and I began to dig into it. Since then, over 300 civil society organizations dealing with civil liberties and refugee protection, as well as basic privacy protection groups such as OpenMedia and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, have raised questions and deep concerns, calling on the government to withdraw the legislation. It is not that I think our government is anything like Donald Trump's government, but the legislation is Trumpian. Therefore, we need to stop, think, reflect and withdraw the legislation so that we can focus on its title, its alleged purpose, which is the strong borders act.

I think a lot of Canadians want strong borders dealing with the United States. We know that illegal guns come across the U.S. border into Canada. We know that illegal drugs come into Canada from the U.S. Fentanyl is not flooding into the U.S. from Canada, as the President of the United States would like at least his own citizens to believe. That is a complete fiction, at the level of being a fraud. Canada Border Services agents need their resources amplified so that they can ensure that illegal guns and dangerous drugs are not coming across the Canada-U.S. border, flowing from the U.S. into Canada.

Refugees, people who legitimately need to have a place to claim refugee status, must not be barred before they get any chance to even put forward their claim. I am someone who used to work in this area of law; claiming refugee status is a very steep hill to climb. We do not have a system within this country that tends to support refugees just because they say they are refugees; they have to prove it. They need to have substantial evidence that they have a

legitimate fear of being sent back to their country of origin. The bill, if passed as is, would expedite the deportation of people without them having a chance to make their case, which they have the right to do under Canadian law, as to why they have legitimate fears of being killed if they are sent back to their country of origin.

There is a great deal that needs to be said about this. The more we can deal with it without partisanship, the better. It is an odd experience to hear the Conservatives decry that the Liberals are soft on crime. When I look at the legislation, I wonder what happened to our respect for the charter.

• (1355)

The Minister of Justice has released the analysis from the Department of Justice recognizing that Bill C-2 would raise many concerns about whether it is charter-compliant, and I have read it. I will address this more fully when we resume this debate after we have question period and members' statements. I do not want to risk impeding and encroaching on that time, and I know that I will get cut off anyway. The reality is that this charter statement from the Department of Justice does not assuage my concerns.

It says that the government would be able to access this information but would not be using it in ways that could result in a prosecution. The government would be taking private information for benign purposes, so we should not worry about it opening mail, with a very low threshold for when it is allowed to open mail, or accessing information about an Internet supplier or the information it may have about a citizen. We should not worry about that; the charter statement says the government will not be taking this information in ways that could hurt citizens in the course of protecting their charter rights.

I do not buy it. I do not think many MPs—

• (1400)

The Speaker: The hon. member will have four minutes and four seconds when the House resumes after question period.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***CANADA LABOUR CODE**

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have had flights delayed longer than it took the Liberal government to attack the rights of workers in this country. Over and over and over again, the Liberals have used section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to have back-to-work legislation by another name. They used it against Air Canada flight attendants. They used it against postal workers, who have been asking for a fair contract for years. They used it against port workers across the country. Every time, Liberals told workers that their right to stand up for themselves did not matter to the government. Every time, employers were rewarded for refusing to bargain in good faith.

Good, free collective bargaining is a fundamental right. Section 107 is a backdoor way of kneecapping that right. It tips the scales against workers. It tips the scales against fairness and against democracy itself. Anyone who cares about workers, good jobs and safe workplaces, and who has respect for working people, will repeal—

The Speaker: It is a bit of a distance from here, but I think I see a button. I have been told that the member has a button that may be considered a prop, so I would ask members to avoid that in the future.

The hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek.

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INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 23, the 42nd International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly will convene in Montreal, yet Taiwan, which manages the busy and strategically vital Taipei Flight Information Region, remains excluded. Taiwan's absence undermines global aviation safety and contradicts the spirit of the Chicago Convention. As tensions rise over the Taiwan Strait and concerns grow around China's use of the M503 flight path, Taiwan's participation is more critical than ever.

Taiwan has a strong record in air traffic safety and deserves a voice at ICAO. Exclusion not only risks aviation coordination but has broader geopolitical implications, including for global trade and Canada's economic interests in the Indo-Pacific. Excluding Taiwan from ICAO deliberations undermines our collective mission, because aviation safety knows no borders. Let us stand for safety—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

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PHILANTHROPY IN KAMLOOPS—THOMPSON—NICOLA

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize exceptional philanthropy in Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. First, the Gur Singh Memorial Golf Tournament raises thousands for the Kamloops Brain Injury Asso-

ciation. This year, I joined Dr. Singh's wife and son, who, with the many volunteers involved, have given so much to the community.

Next, I highlight the work of Zainab Oladipo of Afrofusion in Kamloops for her cooking marathon, which broke a world record. All food prepared was donated to the community. Zainab shattered the previous record of 140 hours, 11 minutes and 11 seconds. I want to say congratulations and well done to Zainab.

Lastly, I am grateful for the work of Rotary Club of Kamloops Daybreak for putting on the annual Ribfest since 2012. Many volunteers have made immeasurable contributions, such as Danica Wilkinson, who is always helping out, or Bryce Herman, who has been present since the first Ribfest in 2012. I thank them for over a decade of service.

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VAUGHAN PATRICK MARTIN

Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable man and a dear friend our Orléans community has lost, Vaughan Patrick Martin. A proud Canadian and a devoted public servant, Vaughan served as director of protocol at Global Affairs Canada, a role he called the best job in government. He played a key role in organizing major international events, including G7, NATO and Commonwealth summits, trade missions and state visits. Vaughan was also an active member of the Orleans Lions Club, always bringing his warmth and good humour to community events. All who knew Vaughan could count on him to share an incredible story. Having known him personally for over 10 years, I can say that he had a different story for every occasion, and he never ceased to amaze. Although Vaughan's journey has ended, his stories and adventures live on. I offer my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Audrey; his son, Patrick; his beloved grandchildren; and all his family and friends.

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COMMUNITY BARBECUE

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great time to connect with the people we represent, and there was no better way to do that than the eighth annual Community Barbecue, hosted by myself and my good friend, an MPP and minister, Andrea Khanjin. It took place on August 16 in Stroud. The event saw an incredible turnout, our biggest ever, with more than 1,500 people attending.

*Statements by Members***MAHSA AMINI**

On behalf of Andrea and myself, I want to thank our invaluable community partners, who helped make this event the biggest one yet: the Town of Innisfil, Sobeys Alcona Beach, Foodland Stroud, the South Simcoe Police Service, the Innisfil fire department, Kool FM, Rock 95, Canadian Musicians Co-operative, Georgian College, RVH's Keep Life Wild campaign, Dream Parties, Innisfil Backyard Bounce, Barrie Tent & Awning, The Flag Store, Allegra Barrie, Cyncor and Dave Chalut from Domino's Pizza.

Finally, a barbecue this large would not be possible without our incredible team of staff and volunteers. I want to thank Al Gilchrist and the team he put together. Over 75 people gave of their time on a Saturday in August to help bring our communities together, and they did so knowing the importance of connecting people.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SOCIÉTÉ DU PATRIMOINE ET DE L'HISTOIRE DE TERREBONNE

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Société du patrimoine et de l'histoire de Terrebonne, or PHT, a heritage and historical society founded in 1975 by Aimé Despatis and his associates. For decades, PHT has been stewarding Terrebonne's collective memory and heritage.

I want to thank president Raymond Paquin and executive director Cassandra Smith for their exemplary commitment. Through their efforts, PHT connects generations and celebrates our history through exhibitions, research, educational activities and publications.

I sincerely wish the entire team a happy 50th anniversary and continued success for many years to come.

* * *

[English]

WARRANT OFFICER GEORGE HOHL

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today not only as a member of Parliament from Vancouver Island, but as a veteran who understands the quiet weight of service. I stand here to honour Warrant Officer George Hohl, who tragically passed while deployed in Latvia on Operation Reassurance. His body was returned to Canadian soil on Friday. George served with distinction for nearly 20 years. His commitment to duty touched not only the Canadian Armed Forces, but all Canadians who value quiet courage.

This summer, I visited CFB Edmonton, where George served. I witnessed the honour and excellence our soldiers carry. George embodied that spirit.

To his wife Michelle, his comrades and the defence community, we stand with them, we mourn with them and we honour him. Let us remember Warrant Officer Hohl not only for his service, but for the values he lived: duty, honour and sacrifice.

I say fair winds to Warrant Officer Hohl.

Zoe Royer (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the third anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death in Iran. Her name became a symbol of courage and her story touched the hearts of Canadians, including the Iranian community of my riding. They carry her memory with resilience and hope.

Last year, Port Moody's Art Shuffle featured Coquitlam artist Golriz Rezvani and her *Women, Life, Freedom* series, *Zan, Zendegi, Azadi*. These powerful works gave voice to Mahsa's sacrifice and to the women who risk their lives every day.

On the anniversary of Mahsa's death, Canadians stand united for women's rights and for human rights. Mahsa's life and legacy will not be forgotten.

* * *

[Translation]

FOOD PRICES

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said Canadians would judge him by the prices they see at the grocery store. The results are in, and he is getting a failing grade.

The latest figures on food inflation from Food Banks Canada do not lie. Grocery shopping is getting harder and harder for Canadians. Food prices have risen by 3.5%, which is 70% above the inflation target. Beef prices are up 33%, canned soup is up 26%, and coffee is up 22%.

* * *

● (1410)

FONDATION ÉQUIPE-QUÉBEC

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our U19 team showed off all its skills at the three-versus-three World Ball Hockey Championship final in Slovakia. Team Quebec won in the final with a score of 9–7. Can anyone guess who they beat? It was team Canada.

Statements by Members

The work of the Fondation Équipe-Québec and its president, Stefan Allinger-Cormier, is making a huge difference in young Quebecers' lives by giving them the opportunity to represent the Quebec nation. Like Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and Greenland, Quebec should have the right to wear its own colours at international sports competitions, especially since we are often discriminated against and our athletes are not given a place on the Canadian teams.

In closing, I condemn the Future of Sport in Canada Commission for recommending that the provincial and territorial sports associations be merged with the national federations. That is yet another example of Canada's desire to interfere in the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec. The Bloc Québécois will fight this—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

* * *

MARIE-HÉLÈNE ROSS

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about an inspiring woman who is having an extremely positive impact on her community. Marie-Hélène Ross has devoted her energy to the social, cultural and economic development of Beauport for many years.

A lawyer by profession, she has always combined her expertise with a sincere desire to build a stronger and more supportive community. Through her involvement as the president of the Maison des jeunes de Beauport and TRIP Jeunesse Beauport, she has helped generations of young people by offering them a space for personal development and civic engagement.

In the same unifying spirit, she championed the idea of a public market in Old Beauport, which has now become a vibrant non-profit organization. The market promotes buying local, helping others and respecting the environment while creating a unique gathering place for local residents and producers.

She has a record of leadership guided by listening, action and vision. Through her tireless efforts, she has breathed new life into Beauport. Today, she continues to be a model of determination, generosity and perseverance. Many thanks to Marie-Hélène.

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[English]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government promised nation-building projects, including building the green energy corridor. It has all the tools required, yet nothing has been built in the past six months, and the only projects announced are the ones already under way.

The people of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador want to see action from the Liberal government. An energy corridor would connect Labrador to the rest of the country without other provinces taking the icing and the cake and leaving my province with the crumbs. The government will not repeal Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, the production caps or the industrial carbon tax. It will not even commit to its own promise of building an energy corridor from sea to sea.

It is time for the Liberal government to get out of its own way, stop breaking its promises and use the tools it has, because it is time to get to work.

* * *

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every September, the streets of downtown Toronto in my riding of Spadina—Harbourfront come alive with the magic of cinema. The Toronto International Film Festival is the world's largest public film festival, showcasing over 300 films and drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors from Canada and around the globe.

This year, TIFF celebrated its 50th anniversary. I was honoured to attend the premiere of *John Candy: I Like Me*, a moving tribute to one of Canada's most beloved comedians. I am proud that our Liberal government is supercharging TIFF's global impact with a historic \$23-million federal investment in its new content market, an industry initiative where international film, series and innovation sectors converge.

This industry is a proven economic engine, contributing over \$60 billion to GDP and employing more than 600,000 Canadians. By investing in arts and culture, we safeguard our values, foster national unity and help strengthen a key pillar of Canada's economy.

Happy “TIFF-tieth” anniversary, TIFF. Here is to the next 50 years of storytelling.

* * *

FINANCE

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nearly 10 years of fiscal and economic vandalism, the Liberals claimed they were ready to rein in the out-of-control inflationary spending that piles on debt for future generations and drives up the cost of living. However, since the Prime Minister took office, federal spending has gone up 8.4% based on the estimates tabled in Parliament. He has boosted consultants by 37%, from \$19 billion to \$26 billion. He has also boosted the bureaucracy 6%, from \$59 billion to \$63 billion.

Justin Trudeau left a deficit of \$42 billion, but the Prime Minister's big spending election platform raised it to \$62 billion. In July, the Bank of Montreal estimated the deficit could be as high as \$80 billion, and in August, the C.D. Howe Institute estimated it as high as \$92 billion.

Food and housing remain unaffordable while unemployment is rising, and the government still has no plan and no budget. The Liberals may have pushed Justin Trudeau out, but the fiscal ineptitude remains.

• (1415)

[Translation]

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT-LAZARE

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Saint-Lazare is celebrating its 150th anniversary. This is an amazing milestone for our community.

From its humble beginnings as a small agricultural village, Saint-Lazare has grown into a vibrant city renowned for its natural beauty, equestrian traditions and community spirit.

[English]

To mark this historical occasion, over the past nine months, Saint-Lazarians have been treated to parades, celebrations of founding families, barbecues, music, local food, a hockey game featuring former Montreal Canadiens players and even a Cirque du Soleil show.

[Translation]

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and vision of Paul Lavigne and the members of the 150th anniversary organizing committee, Mayor Geneviève Lachance, the municipal councillors of the City of Saint-Lazare and hundreds of volunteers.

[English]

These celebrations truly captured the spirit and heart of Saint-Lazare, a community where both long-term and new residents come together to share traditions, create memories and look forward to a future with optimism and pride.

Happy 150th, Saint-Lazare. Cheers to the next—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised the fastest-growing economy in the G7. Tell that to every out-of-work young couple living in the worst unemployment and immigration crisis Canada has known. He said that Canadians could judge him by grocery prices. Tell that to Robin in Calgary, who is watching food costs rise faster than when the Prime Minister took office six months ago.

The Prime Minister promised to cap and control spending. Tell that to the taxpayers expected to pay for him doubling the deficit. He promised nation-building projects. Tell that to any resource worker or project builder still waiting for a single permit.

The Prime Minister promised safe communities. Tell that to the Hamiltonians who survived 80 rounds, to the three-year-old girl and her broken-hearted family in Welland, to the family of Abdul Aleem Farooqi in Vaughan, to the Jewish woman stabbed in the kosher section of an Ottawa Loblaws and to the communities of Calgary, Surrey and Halifax.

It is time to stop the broken promises. It is time to stop the bait and switch. It is time for the Prime Minister to do his job.

Oral Questions

NOVA SCOTIA CHEESE TRAIL

Alana Hirtle (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a reminder of the power of continued investment in Canada's rural communities.

I recently had the opportunity to stand alongside Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia and Taste of Nova Scotia to announce this government's financial support for the Nova Scotia Cheese Trail. This initiative creates real opportunities for family farms and local cheese makers to prosper.

The trail connects people from all backgrounds to the stories behind their food and the communities that make it possible. This is not just economic development; it is community building. It is about ensuring that no matter their postal code, people can experience the spirit of agricultural excellence that makes our country stronger, safer and more resilient. Sounds like a pretty “Gouda” idea to me.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are halfway through the fiscal year and the Prime Minister has yet to table a budget, despite managing to double the deficit. The deficit is twice as big as it was under Justin Trudeau. What an accomplishment.

This is causing inflation. Today, we found out from Statistics Canada that the inflation rate is 50 times higher than the target. For food, it is 70% higher. More people are using food banks. The Prime Minister said that Canadians could judge him by the price of groceries.

What is the verdict?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians made a choice during the last election. They chose a government that is going to focus on the economy and on change. That is exactly what we are doing.

We said that we are going to be rigorous in our expenses so we can be ambitious in our investments. Canadians understand that if we want to build a strong economy in the 21st century, we need to invest. That is exactly what we are going to do for Canadians.

We are going to build the most resilient economy in the G7. We are going to build the Canada of the future. We are going to build a Canada that all Canadians can be proud of.

Oral Questions

• (1420)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians cannot even afford to eat.

The Prime Minister promised to spend less, but his deficit spending is twice as high. He promised that food prices would come down, but food prices are rising 70% faster than the Bank of Canada's target. He said there would be less poverty, but there is more.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his empty promises are leading to empty stomachs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we obviously recognize the situation many Canadians are in. That is why, in the last election, Canadians chose a Liberal government, a government that would be there for them.

The first thing this government did was lower taxes for 22 million Canadians, precisely to help families in this country. That is something we should be proud of, it is something the Conservatives should be celebrating, and it is exactly the kind of measure we are going to put in place.

We will help the middle class, help families and build a Canada that all Canadians will be proud of.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised that he would spend less, yet his deficit spending is 100% more, more than even Justin Trudeau. What is the real human consequence of that? Food price inflation is rising 70% faster than the Bank of Canada's target. Today, the CEO of the major food bank network in Toronto says that there has been a 400% increase in food bank use there.

Does the Prime Minister understand that his empty promises lead to empty stomachs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is reassuring to hear that the Leader of the Opposition listened to the Prime Minister during the summer.

I am glad to see he retained that we are going to spend less so we can invest more in Canadians, for example, reducing taxes for 22 million Canadians, making sure that people who want to buy a home for the first time will pay less in GST and making sure that we eliminate the consumer carbon tax.

The Conservative leader should celebrate that this government is there for families across Canada to build a stronger and more—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he wants us to celebrate his failures, including failures that are leading to real human suffering.

Let me quote the CEO of Daily Bread Food Bank, Neil Hetherington: “Giving you some context, previously, before the pandemic, we were at...600,000 for the year.” Those are visits to the food bank. “And so it took 38 years to get to 1 million visits per year,

and then only one year to get to 2 million [visits], another year to 3 [million]. Now we're at 4 million [visits].”

Food bank lineups are growing at an accelerating rate under the Prime Minister. Does he realize the very real human consequences of his broken Liberal promises?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am here to announce some good news. Last night, Canada and British Columbia approved the new Ksi Lisims LNG export terminal in northern British Columbia. It is with the Nisga'a nation. It will be the second-largest private sector investment in the history of this country. It will employ thousands of Canadians.

We would love the Conservatives to help us build Canada.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was not about re-announcing a previously approved project; it was about the cost of food, and frankly, it is insulting. We have asked 10 questions about the cost of food in the last two days, and not a single Liberal minister will get up and answer.

Maybe that is because the inflation rate on food is 70% above the target. Maybe it is because there are now four times as many visits to Toronto food banks as there were three and a half years ago. Maybe it is because the Liberals broke their promise to stabilize food prices. Maybe it is because the Prime Minister promised that he could be judged on the price of food.

Speaking of which, what is the verdict?

• (1425)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while I know we are all in this House concerned about the price of food, and we are also concerned about our farmers, the number one cost of living in Canada is related to housing. As I mentioned yesterday, people are concerned about housing prices. This government is taking action to make housing more affordable. With “build Canada homes”, with tax cuts, with the first-time homebuyers' tax cuts, we are making a difference for people in their pocketbooks.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was about food prices, and the member stood up to announce that he is going to be feeding some of his friends who are going to populate the latest \$13-billion bureaucracy, a bureaucracy that will build no homes and that will only reward Liberal insiders, who, like him, have a record of actually doubling housing costs.

However, back to food, the stuff that needs to go on people's dinner table. We have a record number of people at food banks, after the Prime Minister promised to make food more affordable. Does he not realize that his promises have real costs for Canadians?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a little rich coming from the guy who voted against the national school food program.

I would like to say that Food Banks Canada does exceptional work and it also makes good recommendations for government. One, it suggests we build up Canada's social safety net. Two, it says we should solve the affordable housing crisis and we should help lower-income workers make ends meet. All of those things are things that the Conservative leader votes against time and time again in this House.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put something into context. I went to Washington, not to speak against the government or Canada, but to help establish favourable conditions for what should be our real priority: trade and tariffs.

However, yesterday, when I asked the Prime Minister a serious question, he told me that Canada's negotiations and relationship with Mr. Trump were going well. By way of evidence, he mentioned that they have cell phones and exchange texts.

I want to know who, on the other side of the House, will not be too embarrassed to stand up and explain that to me.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader of the Bloc Québécois for his question.

I am not the least bit embarrassed to remind members of the House and all Canadians that we are in the midst of important discussions with the United States on two fronts. First, we are talking about how to improve trade relations in the short term in strategic sectors, such as the steel, aluminum, auto and softwood lumber industries. Second, we are getting ready to review the free trade agreement between our three countries. That is important work that we look forward to doing with Mexico and the United States.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what I heard in Washington was that people were disappointed that the Prime Minister did not show up, even though the minister was there. There are people who feel that the government's attitude is somewhat disrespectful, particularly since it said that the special relationship with the United States is over. I asked the Prime Minister to address that yesterday.

Is the government not worried that the United States may become legitimately concerned about the Canadian government's attitude heading into negotiations?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in our discussions with our American counterparts, we constantly talk about the importance of having agreements that benefit both economies. I agree with my friend, the leader of the Bloc

Québécois, that the United States will always remain our only neighbour and a critical economic partner.

The Prime Minister has said that the trade relationship is changing. That is what we need to work on to determine the best way to protect Canadians.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, allow me to remind the minister and the government that 80% of our exports go to the world's leading economy and leading military power and none of that is going to change anytime soon. Whether we disagree with this administration's philosophy or not, we have to treat it with respect.

The Prime Minister will soon be travelling to Mexico, Malaysia, South Korea and maybe even Brazil. Amid all of that, will he have a moment to speak with the President of the United States or travel to Washington?

• (1430)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the first part of the question from my friend, the leader of the Bloc Québécois.

Obviously, we have to show respect in our conversations and relations with our American counterparts, and the same goes for the American people. The United States has the largest economy in the world. We currently have the most advantageous agreement of all its trading partners. At the same time, as we have said, we need to diversify our relationships and seek out other markets and other partners.

I have good news: We can do both at once.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, the Prime Minister admits he will outspend Trudeau. Large Liberal deficits made core inflation 50% over target and food prices 75% over target. No wonder everything is so expensive in this country. Let us listen to these stats: beef is up 33%; soup, 24%; and coffee, 22%. Now inflation is up, deficits are up, and borrowing costs are up, while the economy is down, and Canadians are down, because the Prime Minister's elbows are down.

Why does he not put his head down and stop spending so much, so grocery prices can come down?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the situation of many families in this country, and that is why the Prime Minister has been key in acting to make life more affordable for Canadians. The real question people are asking at home today is, why would the Conservatives vote against child care? Why did the Conservatives vote against pharmacare? Why would the Conservatives vote against the dental care program?

Oral Questions

Why would the Conservatives stand up in the House asking these questions when they voted against helping Canadians? On this side of the House, we will always be on the side of Canadians.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is about a \$90 tax cut. That is not even enough to get a bunch of bananas in the week, but Liberal policies are bananas. It is always about promises that they might do something. It is fantasy finance and pretend promises.

At this rate, the next budget might as well come out with a box of crayons and a colouring book. The Prime Minister said to judge him by the price of groceries; grocery prices are up. He said he would deliver the fastest-growing economy in the G7; we have the fastest-shrinking economy in the G7 and the second-highest unemployment rate.

Since the Prime Minister does not do his own groceries, and he admits that, will he at least commit to not making Canadian groceries more expensive?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every time the Conservatives have a chance to help make it easier for families, they vote against these measures. For example, the national school food program, which is actually putting food in children's bellies and helping families with alleviating the cost of feeding their families. These Conservatives voted against that, too.

Every time they have a chance to help bring down costs for Canadian families, like supporting the national child care program, they vote against it. They should look hard in the mirror about who is standing up for Canadian families.

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claims to be different. Instead, six months in, Canadians are now learning that the Prime Minister is no different than the last guy. As Liberals increase spending on their well-connected consulting friends by 37%, everyday Canadians pay more and more for gas and for food. Butter is up 64%, apples are up 60%, and rice is up 74%.

Here is a lesson for my Liberal friends: A deficit that doubles is not different, is it?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague. I would like to remind her that we already cut taxes for the middle class and first-time homebuyers, and as many Conservatives have asked us to do, we also cut the carbon tax. All that is to say that, over the summer, we also took very strong action to bring down costs for broadband services and increase competition in the telecom sector.

We will continue to be there for Canadians and to build Canada strong.

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians that he was the man with the plan, yet six months later, his budget is nowhere to be seen, and experts now project that his deficit will be double what Trudeau already created.

The Prime Minister is proving one thing: Liberals, no matter how they brand themselves, cannot be trusted to handle our finances. Canadians expect and deserve a government that will work for them on the issues that matter the most, yet 60% of Canadians say that the cost of living keeps them up at night. When will the Liberals start acting like it?

• (1435)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we spent the summer listening to Canadians. Do members know what Canadians have told the House? They said to act with respect to the cost of living, and that is exactly what we have done by reducing taxes for 22 million Canadians and having a rebate for the GST for first-time homebuyers. The second thing they said is to make homes more affordable. That is why we recently launched build Canada homes.

The Conservatives should be celebrating today instead of talking down Canada and the Canadian economy. Let us work together to build the strongest nation.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that the out-of-control spending of these Liberals has driven up inflation 50%. The Prime Minister's deficit is projected to be double that of Justin Trudeau's.

Canadians are paying the price, especially at the grocery store. Soup is up 20%. Coffee is up 22%. Groceries overall are up 70%. The Prime Minister said he should be judged on the price of groceries. He has broken his promise to cut the food costs for Canadians and has shown he is just another bait-and-switch Liberal. When will he cut Liberal deficits to bring the cost of food down?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians chose in the last election a Prime Minister who could drive forward an agenda to grow the strongest economy in the G7, and that is exactly what we are doing, but let us take a look at the past. The Conservatives, every time they have the chance, vote against families. The national school food program, for example, puts food in the bellies of children so that they can learn and grow, and by the way, it saves Canadian families \$800 a year. Conservatives voted against it. What kind of help for families is that?

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned, as are my Conservative colleagues. Canadians are concerned about the Liberals' broken promises. The Liberals are blindly spending without a budget. The results are going to be devastating when they finally table a budget one day. This is not a joke. Justin Trudeau was a real Scrooge McDuck compared to the current Prime Minister. The Liberal deficit will be double.

Out of respect for Canadians, the Liberals must table a reasonable budget now.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassure my colleague and remind him that we cut taxes for the middle class. That is the first measure that we put in place. Then, we also cut taxes for first-time home buyers and eliminated carbon pricing. This summer, we lowered Internet prices for Quebecers and Canadians. We also increased competition in the telecommunications sector.

My colleague should simply support the government and its agenda to lower costs for Canadians.

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is announcing spending without a budget.

After six months of broken promises by the Liberals, who misled Canadians, the latter are paying the price. Core inflation is 50% higher than the target. The price of groceries is 75% higher than the target. Beef, grapes and sugar have gone up. I invite the Prime Minister to go to a grocery store to buy fruit, vegetables and meat to make decent meals.

What does he have to say to Canadians? That he is going to double the deficit, that unemployment is going up, that prices are going to keep going up and that everything is fine and dandy?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, it goes without saying that our goal is to lower costs for Canadians. We are taking action. My colleague should take note.

In the meantime, the government is also doing everything to create jobs. Even though there are tariffs on certain sectors, we have implemented a significant strategic initiatives fund of \$5 billion.

Some businesses in my colleague's riding are affected. As the Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, I will be happy to work with my colleague on finding solutions for those business owners.

* * *

JUSTICE

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in January, the Liberals appointed Robert Leckey as a judge on the Quebec Superior Court. However, Mr. Leckey had only seven years of experience at the Quebec bar, whereas the requirement is 10 years.

He did not meet the legal criteria, but he certainly met the Liberal criteria. In addition to being a Liberal donor, Judge Leckey is a fervent activist against bills 21 and 96. He is against secularism,

Oral Questions

against the Charter of the French Language and against Quebec identity.

Will the Minister of Justice revoke this partisan appointment?

● (1440)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that there is a legal challenge surrounding the appointment of this judge to the Quebec Superior Court. The Canadian judicial appointment process is among the most thorough and independent in the world, and we remain committed to preserving it.

Judicial independence is one of the cornerstones of our democracy and it is essential to protecting the rule of law. Any suggestion to the contrary undermines these very principles, but we will always defend the independence of our courts.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the legal challenge against Bill 96 was in full swing, Mr. Leckey was a vocal opponent during demonstrations against it. When the legal challenge against Bill 21 was in full swing, Mr. Leckey argued that the courts should prevent the provinces from using the Constitution's notwithstanding clause.

He is an enemy of Quebec's laws, and yet the Liberals appointed him as a judge. In politics, this is known as stacking the deck, except in this case, the deck is the court. The public's confidence in the entire justice system is being compromised by partisan appointments.

Why has the minister not yet revoked this appointment?

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important that we come to understand the process by which we nominate judges benefits from the independent advice of those who are experts in assessing the quality of those who are elevated to the bench.

It is extremely important that we maintain the independence of the judiciary if we are going to count on our democracy to serve future generations of Canadians. To characterize those who have been appointed as "enemies of the state" is dangerous.

I would encourage my colleagues on all sides of the House to advocate for an independent judiciary to defend our democracy for years to come.

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said Canadians should judge him by the cost at the grocery store. Well, they have, and his record has aged like an expired yogourt on a hot day in July. Food prices are up another 3.5% because his out-of-control spending keeps driving up inflation. This spending does not just show up on the government books. It shows up on the grocery bill of every Canadian family.

Will the Liberals admit that the doubling of the deficit will only make food inflation worse?

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 important that Canadians can rely on the services that the federal government has put into place to make life more affordable with things like a national dental care program. I have heard from so many people in my riding about how programs that the federal government has put into place to make life more affordable are changing their lives.

These are the kinds of things Conservatives would cut if they had the chance. We will not stand for that.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Liberal excuses could fill a shopping cart, no one in this country would go hungry, but families cannot eat the word salad these ministers keep dishing out. Today, 25% of households cannot afford food. Many are having to skip meals for days. This hardship is the direct result of the Liberal government's reckless spending. Every dollar the Liberals add to the deficit feeds inflation, but it does not feed hungry families.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit his broken promises and reckless spending are hurting Canadians?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians clearly understand the difference between investment and cuts. That is why they chose us in the last election. They know we are going to create the jobs that are going to ensure that they and their children have the bright futures that all Canadians deserve.

The Canada child benefit delivers over \$7,700 per child into Canadians' bank accounts every year. This is a game-changer for families, and Canadians knew that these kinds of things were at risk with Conservatives, who cut, cut, cut.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said Canadians would judge him by the cost at the grocery store. Canadians are indeed judging, and 25% of Canadian households are struggling to afford food. Food bank use since the pandemic is up from 600,000 to four million at Canada's largest food bank in Toronto. This is another Liberal broken promise.

Does the Prime Minister understand that the country is facing a cost of living crisis, and will he admit that doubling his deficit will pour gas on the fire of food inflation?

• (1445)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency

for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a short while ago, Canadians had a choice. They could choose Conservatives, who were promising to cut their way to growth, something that Canadians know is impossible, but instead, they chose a Prime Minister who would invest in them, invest in their families and invest in the growth that Canada and Canadians deserve. That was the result of the election. The Conservatives know that they have stood against families every time they have had a chance to support them.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the attempt to distract from the real issue, the reality is that everywhere I go in my riding, I hear the same concern. People are stretched thin and families are struggling to put food on the table. This is a national crisis. A new report from Food Banks Canada gives the Liberal government a failing grade on food insecurity. Beef is up 33%. Basics like sugar and potatoes are climbing by double digits, and food banks are stretched way beyond their limits.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit that doubling the deficit will only make food inflation worse?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on that side, what Conservatives want to do is cut the things that Canadians rely on, but on this side, we are cutting taxes. We have cut taxes for the middle class. There are 22 million Canadians who are benefiting. We cut the carbon tax, reducing the cost of gasoline and other oils for Canadians. We are investing in the creation of jobs and skills training, and ensuring Canadians and their children have the best chance at success. The Conservatives across the aisle voted against all of that work.

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will remind members that the Liberals cut the carbon tax after we put pressure on them.

We know that the Prime Minister said Canadians should judge him by the cost at the grocery store. Parents across the country are trying to fill lunch kits with nutritious food, but prices keep climbing. According to the CEO of Canada's largest food banks, visits increased to two million under Trudeau and have now jumped to four million under the Prime Minister. It is another broken Liberal promise.

Will the Prime Minister admit to Canadians now that doubling the deficit would only make food inflation worse?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, finally, a place where I can agree with the member opposite.

In fact, Canadian families are relying on the government to ensure that their children get a nutritious school lunch. That is why, in partnership with provinces and territories, we have a brand new school food program. It is a program and an approach that the Conservatives voted against. These Conservatives, every time they have a chance to help Canadian families, vote against it.

Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave the government a clear mandate to build an economy that stands up for our workers and industries and to make life more affordable. We reduced taxes for 22 million Canadians, eliminated GST for first-time homebuyers, removed the consumer carbon tax, fought for our steel and aluminum sectors, and created one strong economy instead of 13.

Could the Minister of Finance please update the House on the next steps to building the strongest economy in the G7?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great question indeed. We are going to present a great budget in the House on November 4. This is going to be a generational investment in our future. We are going to build this country. We are going to protect our communities. We are going to empower Canadians. We are going to build the strongest economy in the G7. We are going to build this country like never before. We are going to build the Canada of the 21st century. We are the true north strong and free.

* * *

● (1450)

HOUSING

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised he would double housing starts; he looked Canadians in the face and promised. Starts are down 16%. His plan is a \$13-billion bureaucracy that might someday build 4,000 homes. Canada had 245,000 new home starts last year. Even if they hit 4,000 homes, it is a 1.6% increase.

Please, for the sake of Canadians trying to buy a house, can the minister tell me this is not the plan?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the math is difficult for the Conservatives, but we can help them with this.

We are looking at investing \$13 billion in affordable housing across the country. The initial 4,000 homes will be on Canada Lands Company land in six cities across the country. That is getting a quick start on building affordable homes. We are going to see tens of thousands of homes built across Canada in all of our communities. We count on the support across the House.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$13 billion for 4,000 homes is \$3.2 million per home. That is not affordable.

Oral Questions

It is all starting to make sense where this scheme was cooked up. The Liberals have a housing minister who oversaw the doubling of rent and the doubling of housing prices when he was mayor of Vancouver. The head of the new agency came from the City of Toronto, which increased the cost of building by 700%. It is almost like the interview process for these positions asked, “Are they incompetent? Were they fired from their last job?”

Once again, for the sake of Canadians begging to buy a home, can the minister please tell me this is not the plan?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while I know it is difficult for the Conservatives to evolve and focus on supporting us to build affordable housing across Canada, that is what we are focused on doing at an unprecedented level.

When I was mayor, I had no support from a Conservative government to build affordable housing in Vancouver. I know it was the same in Toronto. We are going to support our local governments. We are going to build in Montreal 20,000 homes on the Namur-Hippodrome site in the middle of the city. We are going to see remarkable progress on this front.

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the dream of home ownership is becoming a nightmare in Canada. The Prime Minister promised to double the pace of home construction. Now the Liberals are spending \$13 billion to build just 4,000 homes, and yes, the math is \$3.2 million per home. This will blow up the deficit and not impact housing starts, which are actually down 16%.

Taxpayers cannot afford to build \$3.2-million homes, but we know the minister can afford to live in one. Will the new homes be as luxurious as his condos?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, \$13 billion will be invested across Canada, in communities across Canada. We are looking at partnerships with provinces, territories, communities of all shapes and sizes, and indigenous nations. We will empower the private sector to build tens of thousands of homes. We are looking forward to rolling out the most aggressive housing program in Canadian history. We look forward to the member's support.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to double housing starts, but instead, they are actually down 16%.

This should come as no surprise. The Prime Minister's entourage includes the former mayor of Vancouver, who saw housing prices increase by 150%, and a former Toronto city councillor, who raised taxes on residential construction by 700%.

Does the Prime Minister realize that it is not surprising that construction is down and costs are up, considering the so-called leaders in his closest circle?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we need to do to address the housing crisis is co-operate with municipalities, provinces and people on the ground. That is the opposite of what the Conservative Party is proposing. The Leader of the Opposition has repeatedly criticized the mayors of cities like Quebec City, Montreal and others across the country.

Yesterday, my friend and colleague, the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, and I announced 20,000 homes, 10,000 of which will be non-market, in other words, social and community housing. That is how we are going to address this crisis. It is not by insulting our partners on the ground.

• (1455)

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is further compounding the problem with a new Crown corporation that will make it even harder to build housing.

He is allocating \$13 billion to build 4,000 homes, which works out to \$3.2 million per home. That seems worthwhile, does it not? Everyone knows that. This is completely unacceptable. This is the same wasteful government, bogged down in bureaucracy and entangled in its own red tape.

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to change the formula that has been failing for 10 years?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the members opposite are saying, it is important to know what we are talking about. I am a founding member of a housing co-op. I know very well that in order to get these projects off the ground, we need to work together, not against each other, because that does not work. The Conservative approach, which is to cut, cut, cut, does not work. That is not the right way to build homes. Furthermore, expecting the private sector to step up and build affordable, social housing is certainly not how we will get this done.

That is why the federal government is working in partnership with provinces, municipalities and community groups to help all Canadians have access to housing.

*[English]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question is for the immigration minister. There are a staggering 300,000 people in Canada with pending asylum claims. Many of these will be bogus. New data we obtained today shows the profound cost of this failure.

Since 2016, the Liberals have increased the cost of the interim federal health program, which includes support for benefits for people who have likely made bogus claims, by nearly 1200%. This includes massive spending on benefits Canadians are not eligible for. Can the minister explain why?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just ran a campaign on restoring sustainability to our immigration system to ease pressure on housing and social services, something the Conservatives also voted for. Our immigration levels plan reduced targets for permanent residents. That plan is working. New student and temporary worker admissions are down more than 60%, asylum claims are down one-third and new permanent residents will be down 20% at the end of the year. With Bill C-2 we can do even more. I urge parliamentarians to support it.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister just said that the Liberals' immigration plan is working. The Liberals are spending at least \$800 million this year because they allowed the asylum backlog to mushroom to nearly 300,000 people, many of whom have bogus claims, and allowed them to stay in the country for years. That is why the Liberals had to increase the program to that level. This strains health care, strains housing and makes a mockery of our once-compassionate asylum system.

Is this really what the minister defines as an immigration system that is working?

[Translation]

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the goals of the campaign we ran a few months ago was to restore the vitality of our immigration system in order to alleviate the housing and services crisis.

Our measures are working. Admissions of new students and temporary workers have decreased by more than 60%. Asylum applications have fallen by a third. The number of new residents will be reduced by 20%.

With Bill C-2, we will continue that work. I invite all parliamentarians to join us.

[English]

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this summer I sat with agencies in Newmarket and learned of the urgent need for mental health counselling, yet the funds are never enough. However, today we obtained new data that shows that the Liberals have increased funding for services like mental health counselling for a group that includes bogus asylum claimants by nearly 1200%. There are many Canadians who have paid taxes their whole life and cannot afford counselling services.

Canadians are compassionate people, but why is the minister not stopping asylum system abuse?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that there is legislation before Parliament right now that would give the legal authority to my colleague, the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, the ability to deal more efficiently with the issue of asylum seekers.

We know that migratory pressures are going to continue around the world. We know we want to have secure, meaningful borders. We know we want to have the legislative powers to be able to deal with the situation in an orderly way. The only thing we do not know is where the Conservatives are going to stand on this. Will they let the legislation through Parliament, pass it and help us fix it—

• (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Markham—Unionville has the floor.

Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question is for the immigration minister.

Seniors in the greater Toronto area are having to choose between heating and eating, but now we know that over the past decade, the Liberals spent more on providing benefits to a group that includes bogus asylum claimants than on their platform promise to spend on upgrading long-term care facilities.

Canadian seniors are suffering, so why did the Liberals allow Canada's once-compassionate asylum system to become an abused system that fails everyone?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our new government continues to build a strong system for Canada's seniors. We know that seniors deserve to retire with dignity, and we work closely with our provincial counterparts to ensure that they have access to long-term care beds, as well as other forms of housing, and are able to age in place. We are working really closely with the Minister of Housing to ensure that seniors are housed, but also we are ensuring that they retire with dignity, with access to old age security, which we increased by 10% in July 2022.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada and Quebec are at a crossroads. International trade has been turned upside down. Supply chains have been disrupted, and new

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technologies such as artificial intelligence promise to radically transform the way we live and do business.

Canadians have given this government a strong mandate to tackle this crisis. The upcoming federal budget will outline the government's plan to build a strong Canadian economy, the strongest in the G7.

Can the Minister of Finance inform the House of the next steps in this crucial process?

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

We will be presenting an excellent budget to the House on November 4. It will be a generational investment in our future. It will be a budget to build our country. It will be a budget to protect our communities. It will be a budget to build our economy. We will build the most resilient economy in the G7. We will build the Canada of the 21st century.

Long live Canada.

[English]

Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our expectations for the Prime Minister were low, but holy smokes. He has been Prime Minister for six months, and we still have not seen a budget.

The Prime Minister said that he would spend less than Trudeau, but his deficit is projected to be almost double the number that forced the former finance minister to resign the first time around. This is another broken Liberal promise. It is a Liberal bait and switch. This massive deficit spending is driving up inflation and sending the price of groceries sky-high.

When will the Prime Minister admit that his broken promises are breaking the bank for Canadians?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now that our Conservative colleagues know the date of the budget, I hope they are prepared to go back to their ridings to explain to Canadians this generational investment in our collective future. I am sure they will be proud to go back to their ridings to say, "We're building this country," that this budget is going to protect their community, that this budget is going to empower Canadians and that this budget is going to build the strongest economy in the G7.

I hope all Conservatives and all members of the House will go out and tell Canadians that together we will make it. We are the true north strong and free.

Oral Questions

Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the latest food inflation numbers are out, and it is more sticker shock for Canadians. Groceries are up a whopping 70% above the Liberal inflation target. Since the Liberals took office, food costs have risen by 40%, driving millions more Canadians to the food bank every single month. The Prime Minister said that he would be judged by prices at the grocery store. Well, the verdict is in: It is another Liberal broken promise, another Liberal bait and switch.

When will the Prime Minister admit that doubling the Liberal deficit is just going to send these record-high food prices even higher?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy from the Conservative side today is just astonishing. They have not listened to any of the recommendations from the Food Banks report.

What gets me going even worse is that earlier this year when the leader of the Conservative Party lost his job, he did not lose his house. That is because he lives in government-subsidized, non-market housing, but every time he has the chance to vote for government-subsidized, non-market housing, he votes against it. Worse still, he stigmatizes it, calling it “Soviet-style” housing. Get a grip.

• (1505)

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is just another bait-and-switch Liberal. He has broken promise after promise after promise, and it is hurting Canadians. His massive Liberal deficits are leading to an even worse cost of living crisis than we had under Justin Trudeau. Canadians can barely afford even a can of soup, especially because inflation has driven the cost of a can of soup up 26%, or a can of tuna, which is up 19%.

Is it not true that the Prime Minister is just another Liberal who is only good at one thing: breaking promises?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not want to take advice on the economy from a party whose leader has never worked in it.

We have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We have cut the consumer carbon tax. We have cut taxes for first-time homebuyers. We are going to build homes at a scale not seen since World War II.

We are going to build the strongest economy in the G7. I ask the Conservatives to get on board.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, access to safe and affordable housing is a basic need and a shared responsibility. Canadians expect real progress to accelerate housing construction and lower costs so that young people, families, vulnerable people and those at all stages of life can access housing that meets their needs.

Can the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure update the House on the government's recently announced plan to improve housing affordability and access across the country?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Madawaska—Restigouche for his question.

Our government recently launched “build Canada homes”, a new agency to address the housing crisis. This new agency will focus on the rapid construction of affordable housing on a large scale across the country.

It is time to build.

* * *

FINANCE

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been six months and the Prime Minister has still not presented a budget. As a result, the projected deficit is more than double what the Liberals themselves predicted.

The Bank of Canada just announced that core inflation is 50% higher than what it had targeted. These deficits are driving inflation, and Canadian families are paying the price at the grocery store every week. The Liberals are breaking their promises, and meanwhile, Canadian families are going into debt to put food on the table.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister stop running deficits and finally give Canadian families a break?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the government will present its budget on November 4. That is when we will see the Conservatives' true colours. Will they support a plan to make generational investments in the Canadian economy? Will they be there to support Canadian families? Will they be there to support the Canadian economy? Will they be there to support Canadian workers?

The last time we introduced measures to help Canadians, they voted no. This time, Canadians will be watching. People expect every member of the House to support the budget to move Canada forward.

LABOUR

Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on August 17, Air Canada flight attendants went on strike so they could get paid for the work they do prior to a flight. That same day, only a few hours later, the Minister of Jobs used section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to end the job action. This is a major assault on workers' rights. It is an attack on free collective bargaining. This is a handout to a company that was expecting the government to do just that. The Liberals have used this section eight times in the past two years.

Will the Liberals support workers and get rid of section 107?

• (1510)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are trying to strike a balance in the relationship with labour unions.

[English]

It is very important that the government work with both parties, unions and employers, to find a balance to make sure that we uphold the collective rights for labour action, but that we also maintain industrial peace. Canadians expect us to get this balance right, and that is exactly what we have done.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it seems that “elbows up” has been replaced with “chequebooks out”.

The Canadian Nuclear Laboratories partnership is primarily U.S. corporations, the private sector, and is involved with the nuclear weapons industry. It has now done a deal with our old friend at SNC-Lavalin, now called AtkinsRéalis, which operates Canadian Nuclear Laboratories.

Canada is giving them the biggest federal contract we have ever issued, at \$24 billion. The deal is being reviewed by the Competition Bureau. When will it go to national security for a review, or do we just write cheques to Trump now?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's nuclear expertise is a significant part of what will enable us to become an energy superpower.

The process to select the new contractor to manage Canadian Nuclear Laboratories was done independently of the government by AECL. More than 95% of the funding will be spent in Canada, employing Canadians at Canadian facilities. All of the senior management will be based in Canada. We have looked after this.

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I know you have talked about decorum in this place. I may not agree with his policies, but the member for Chilliwack—Hope asked a straight question of the government. My friend, the Secretary of State for Sport, whom I call a friend because I consider him that, responded with “Get a grip”. I think there is a point to be made here. There has to be respect on both sides of this place, and I hope the secretary of state will take this point and maybe refrain from that in the future.

Privilege

The Speaker: I did not hear that comment, but obviously we want to keep the language respectful in this place.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Standing Order 158 speaks to the conduct of visitors in our galleries. I received a notice during question period that Air Canada flight attendants who were in the gallery were wearing red T-shirts that said “Unpaid Work Won't Fly”. They advised that they sent a picture of their shirts to the Sergeant-at-Arms or whoever controls admission to the gallery and received explicit permission to be in the gallery with those shirts. Twenty minutes into question period, they were asked to leave, and they were advised that some member on the government side expressed that they were uncomfortable with the T-shirts.

I am just wondering, Mr. Speaker, if you could rule on whether members of the government are allowed to kick out Canadians who are watching the people's business in their House of Commons when they are wearing T-shirts that were approved by the House of Commons.

The Speaker: I was not aware of the backstory here, but I will look into it and get back to the House.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

MEMBERS' ACCESS TO FEDERAL PENITENTIARY

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here to speak to the question of privilege that was raised yesterday by my colleague, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola and shadow minister for public safety.

It is my responsibility to ensure the well-being of Canadians, including those behind prison walls, so why was I stymied from entering the Fraser Valley women's prison freely this past summer? What are they hiding behind those walls?

As their representative in Parliament, it is my duty, not a courtesy or a request, to verify first-hand that incarcerated women, many of whom are dealing with mental illness, abuse and trauma, are being treated humanely and with dignity. Parliament gave me this responsibility because oversight matters. It is one of the few safeguards we have for ensuring the state does not abuse its power behind locked doors.

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When I am blocked from fulfilling my role, it is not just an inconvenience; it is an abuse of power. It strips vulnerable women of their voice and strips the public of their right to know what is being done in their name with their tax dollars under the banner of justice. Denying elected officials access to see how inmates are treated without the filter of management is a serious breach of trust. If I can be shut out, then so can accountability, and when transparency dies, abuse thrives.

I rise today to bring to the attention of the House this very serious breach of privilege by Corrections Canada.

On July 28, I attended the Fraser Valley Institution, a women's prison in the Abbotsford region, with the intention of fulfilling what I feel is my most important duty as a member of Parliament: to ensure that all Canadians, including those in federal custody, are treated with dignity, care and humanity. Unfortunately, that oversight was aggressively and intentionally obstructed.

When I arrived with my colleague, the shadow minister for public safety, we were told that our tour would be accompanied by Mr. Chris Szafron, the assistant warden of management services. My colleague and I clearly explained that we wished to tour with only uniformed correctional officers so that inmates and staff would feel free to speak openly with us. We made it clear that the presence of senior management would inhibit transparency and hinder trust. However, Mr. Szafron refused. He insisted on joining the tour, dismissing our concerns by saying, "No one will know who I am. I'm just a guy in a polo shirt." I disagreed. Inmates and staff definitely know who the assistant warden is.

We asked who had instructed him to impose this condition, and he claimed that it came from the warden directly. We then asked to speak with the warden ourselves, but we were told that she was unavailable. We asked for a phone call. We were refused. We asked if our safety was at risk, and he said no. We asked again if we could proceed with the uniformed officers already present. Again, he said no, and all the while his tone was aggressive, his posture was intimidating and his behaviour was wholly inappropriate.

The correctional officers who accompanied us appeared shocked, and I do not blame them, because what occurred that day was an intentional act to prevent members of Parliament from doing their job. The message from Mr. Szafron, and by extension his superiors, was chillingly clear: "You are not welcome to conduct oversight here."

I left that day with deep concern not only for the staff and inmates, who may be subjected to this kind of culture of intimidation, but also for the integrity of our role as parliamentarians. When management closes ranks and bars elected officials from seeing behind those doors, the natural question is, what are they trying to hide?

As a woman, I was particularly taken aback by the condescension and lack of respect shown to me throughout this encounter. However, more than that, I was outraged on behalf of the women inside that facility, who may not have anyone else to speak for them and who are now being denied even that.

In summary, the assistant warden of the Fraser Valley Institution, under direct instruction from the warden, obstructed and interfered

with my ability to carry out my duty as a parliamentarian. That amounts to a breach of the established privilege to be free from obstruction, interference and intimidation.

• (1515)

My colleague, who explained yesterday how this behaviour interfered with his parliamentary work in the House and at committee this autumn, has already proposed a motion to refer this to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I add my voice to that call.

Our duty as members of Parliament is clear. We do not turn a blind eye. We do not look the other way. We show up, and we insist on accountability, even behind prison walls.

• (1520)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for her intervention. Obviously, her input will be taken into consideration, along with that of the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, to be clear, I would like to reserve the opportunity to come back and address this after reviewing the comments.

The Speaker: It has been noted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

STRONG BORDERS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, Bill C-2 is an omnibus bill that would change multiple pieces of legislation, and it really would not address the issue of strong borders. When we are addressing as many different bills as this bill does, to repeat what I mentioned earlier, we attract the attention of 300 different non-governmental organizations across Canada in a coalition. Groups with very different interests are looking at our positions on the civil society protection of charter rights.

I have looked at the government's tabling, through the Minister of Justice, of the charter statement to see whether this bill is charter-compliant, and it really comes down to a series of statements of analysis saying that, while this bill could attract challenges under section 8 of the charter and involves intrusions of privacy, it is all going to be okay because "trust us".

At this point, we are looking at intrusions of our civil liberties, which other members of Parliament have mentioned, with a very low threshold for opening our mail. It is true, as I know a parliamentary secretary said, that a small envelope with a small amount of fentanyl can kill many people, but this bill does not try to categorize in any way or create any kind of threshold for reasonable suspicion that mail is conveying drugs. This is a very different way of approaching the protection of Canadians. What it is really about when we look at it in the current political context is what we can do to convince Donald Trump that we are going to sacrifice the civil liberties of Canadians to meet the talking points of a deranged U.S. President. It is just not acceptable.

I urge all members of Parliament in this place, all parties, to take the time it takes. This bill will get to second reading. I think it is unlikely we can stop it, although that would be great. The Liberals do not have a majority in this place. Maybe we can stop it from going to second reading. In the meantime, it is likely to go to second reading, and it needs thorough study at committee, particularly from experts, on the charter compliance questions. There is no point in passing a law that would be very soon struck down by the courts as violating our charter rights.

I know I have very little time left, but I hope I will have time in questions and comments to expand on some of these points. Bill C-2 should be rejected. It would be much easier to start over and have a bill that starts from the premise that it is about borders, not about trying to appease the White House.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the overall assessment coming from the leader of the Green Party. This bill is indeed a reflection of what came out of the last election. That is the reason it was introduced back in June. It reflects what Canadians wanted to see with regard to building one stronger economy and dealing with specific border issues. It complements the hundreds of millions of dollars in investments for beefing up our borders. This is something Canadians were told about in the last election.

I would question the privacy-related issues. This is the party that brought in the Charter of Rights. We are very much aware of civil rights.

I agree with the member. Let us at least get the bill to committee and see what happens with amendments.

• (1525)

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, if I was not clear, I do not want to get the bill to committee. Let it die here at the end of first reading and fail at second reading.

The bill attracts a number of concerns, and there was never any campaign discussion that it was important to deny people the rights that they would ordinarily have to ask for refugee protection in this

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country. They would be denied those rights without a hearing, and that is unprecedented.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on that particular point, does the member not see the difference between that and individuals who come to Canada on a temporary visa and are in Canada for over a year? She is talking about many people, whether it is back in 2010 or today. The issue is about ensuring the refugee process is not being abused.

There is a political responsibility here. We saw that today in question period. Why will the leader of the Green Party not recognize there is value to that?

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is because I have represented refugees in the past in my work in the private practice of law that I know the laws around the international status of refugee protection. Someone in Canada could have a reasonable expectation that they can stay in this country but then find out they have to leave. Until Bill C-2 passes, the door is open for them to make a claim if they have legitimate grounds to do so. We are shutting that door when they do not have a chance. It is a catch-22 being imposed on people who are potentially legitimate refugees. That means we are violating our international treaty obligations to protect refugee rights.

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

I know that my hon. colleague has a legal background. There is a critical point that I would love her point of view on, both as a former lawyer and as a parliamentarian.

In part 4 of the act, under "Inspection of mail", it says, "The Corporation may open any mail if it has reasonable grounds to suspect that". Then it goes on and the legislation is the exact same. A warrant is obtained generally on reasonable grounds to believe. This is on reasonable grounds to suspect, which is a lower legal threshold. I do not see any requirement for a warrant here. I wonder if the member would agree. Perhaps I am missing something.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in my speech that it is unprecedented to take away a Canadian's right to the privacy of mail delivery. The amendments to the Canada Post Corporation Act, which the member mentioned are in part 4, are warrantless, and the threshold is lower. It should be a source of concern to all Canadians that we are creating a law that says we can open mail if we have reason to suspect. On top of that, the sharing of information could mean that more open Canadian privacy information could go to U.S. authorities.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I move to the matter at hand, I want to say what a privilege it is to be back in Ottawa to fight for the people of Cambridge and North Dumfries.

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It has been nearly three months since members of Parliament have been in this place to debate issues of importance and hold the government accountable for its actions. It is almost like the government did not want anybody to hold it accountable, or maybe it wanted a long, lazy summer vacation. Whatever it was, it certainly was no vacation for me and my team. Every day, we were out in the community attending events, helping constituents with casework and listening to all the things on our neighbours' minds.

What did they have to say? They told me, overwhelmingly, that a decade of Liberal government has made life harder, that finding a good-paying job or any kind of job is harder, that affording a home or even an apartment is harder and that affording the necessities of life, just basics like groceries, is harder. I am always going to stand up for these fundamental issues and be a champion for common sense and the for Canadian dream that hard work can pay off.

Life is also harder for the most vulnerable in our community. The exploding number of homeless encampments and of people experiencing homelessness is an incredibly visible and heart-wrenching concern for all of us. It is hard to take a walk through downtown Cambridge without seeing one of our neighbours in distress and people who do not have a warm place to sleep, a warm meal to eat or a chance of getting back on their feet. What used to be a peaceful area has now been transformed into ground zero of a tent city disaster unfolding right before our eyes. The Liberal-manufactured housing crisis, which has caused home prices to double in less than a decade, is a big part of why there are so many people sleeping on our streets.

However, another huge reason is the wave of addiction and the opioid epidemic that has flooded our communities, big and small. The Liberal government fanned the flames of that program, offering free drugs and a quick high instead of hope and recovery for the people who needed it most, and it left our borders vulnerable and open to international gangs and smugglers to use our country as a dumping ground for drugs like fentanyl. Those drugs end up on the street in cities like mine, and even a tiny amount can literally kill people.

Now the Liberals have put forward a new bill, Bill C-2, that is supposed to address the problem of fentanyl on our streets and narcotics being smuggled across our border. In all seriousness, that is like the person who set a house on fire showing up with a bucket to put out the flames. It just does not make sense. The same people who broke it cannot and should not be trusted to fix it.

Fentanyl is not just another drug; it is a lethal poison that is tearing apart families in Cambridge, North Dumfries and every community across Canada. A few grains can end a life. Paramedics in my riding respond to overdose calls daily, and our hospitals are overwhelmed with patients fighting for their life. Parents tell me they are terrified their child will be the next obituary. That is the human cost: not statistics, but loved ones lost.

Drug smugglers do not operate alone; they are tied to organized crime, violent gangs and international cartels that see Canada as an easy target. When border controls are weak, those criminals walk right through the cracks. Bill C-2 talks about tightening enforcement, but without tougher bail conditions and mandatory jail time, the same gang members will be back on our streets within days.

Canadians deserve laws that protect victims, not revolving doors for offenders.

The government can pat itself on the back for introducing Bill C-2, but here is the truth: There are many parts of the legislation that fall far too short. There are no new tools for prosecutors to keep traffickers behind bars. There are no real investments in treatment and recovery that offer people hope instead of despair, and there are no guarantees that the flow of precursor chemicals, the ingredients for fentanyl, will actually be stopped at the border. For all the government's talk, there is no guarantee that the bill would end the opioid epidemic, far from it.

Conservatives believe in strong borders, serious sentences for smugglers and a pathway to recovery for the people trapped in addiction. That is what real leadership looks like.

Let me be clear that I am ready to work with anybody from any party who wants to help fix our borders, stop the drugs and get people in my community the help they need, but we simply cannot afford more of the same things from the same Liberal government: more talk and more empty platitudes with devastating consequences for Canadians, and that is what the bill is all about. It would not implement bail reform for violent gang members and smugglers who make drugs, transport drugs, sell drugs and destroy the lives of people who live in my riding and of hundreds of thousands of people across this country.

● (1530)

That means that the people who are driving the crisis get to keep walking through the Liberal revolving door of no consequences, free to keep flooding our streets with narcotics. If someone does happen to be put behind bars, the bill would not implement stricter sentencing provisions. We would still have no mandatory prison time for fentanyl traffickers and no mandatory prison time for gangsters who commit violent crimes with guns. We need to stop the smugglers, put the bad guys in jail and end the Liberal regime of endless free drugs for everyone.

Instead of cracking down on the drug traffickers and gangs that fuel the crisis, the Liberals are trying to hide the problem by shuffling people into senior housing without safeguards. Individuals dealing with drugs and creating disorder are being placed in the same apartment buildings as vulnerable seniors. The result is theft, fear and seniors who feel like a prisoner in their own home. I hear this every week from seniors in my community. They worked hard all their life, and they should feel safe in their home, but many of them no longer do. Bill C-2 would do nothing to change that. It goes after paperwork, not the predators. It leaves the real criminals free while vulnerable Canadians live in fear.

When the Liberals are not using the bill to keep letting criminals roam free on our streets, they are taking massive new steps to give themselves more power to control the everyday lives of Canadians. For instance, they want to impose a massive new restriction on the use of cash in private transactions, limiting cash payments of \$10,000 or more. Our multinational banker and economist Prime Minister should realize that seniors, farmers and small businesses often rely on cash for larger purchases or sales. Restricting those transactions would not stop organized crime; it would just make life harder for people who follow the rules.

Let us talk about what the bill would do. Bill C-2 would give the government the power to open mail without oversight, force Internet companies to hand over their data and give itself more opportunities to perform warrantless searches. Canadians need to know that Bill C-2 would go well beyond border measures; it would also introduce new surveillance powers that deserve a full and separate debate. If the government believes these powers are necessary, they should be studied carefully in their own bill with the proper scrutiny of Parliament.

To me this looks like the Liberal government is focusing on giving itself more powers at the cost of law-abiding Canadians' civil liberties, instead of actually going after the dangerous criminals who threaten the safety not just of the people of Cambridge but of all Canadians.

These measures are wrong and must be fixed, because we know that when Ottawa gets more powers, it never, ever gives them up. We would not have even needed to introduce a bill like this in the first place if the Liberal government had not broken what it inherited from Stephen Harper: a strong border, a functioning criminal justice system and a safe and secure immigration process that was the envy of the world.

Instead, after 10 years of an incompetent and out-of-touch government, drugs and guns, criminals and contraband flow across our borders with impunity. The criminals often get more rights than their victims, while getting a slap on their wrist and paying no price whatsoever, and that is not to mention an immigration system that nobody, not even immigrants themselves, trusts to work in the best interest of this country.

There is good news and bad news. The good news is that we can fix all these problems. I still believe that Canada is the best country in the world and a place we are so blessed to call home. I remain honoured to be Cambridge's voice in this place through the good and bad times. However, the bad news is that we cannot trust the

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Liberal government, an overbearing, incompetent and careless government, to clean up the mess it created itself.

Bill C-2 is called the strong borders act, but there is nothing strong about weak sentencing, revolving-door justice and half measures that punish honest Canadians more than criminals. If the Liberals were serious about strong borders, they would listen to the Conservative proposals, secure the border, end catch and release for traffickers and give people struggling with addiction a real chance at recovery.

We are calling for better. Police are calling for better. Victims and their families are calling for better. Is the government going to listen? Only time will tell.

● (1535)

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Conservative Party spoke about the importance of border security and even mentioned the Harper government's record in that area.

I would like to remind her that during their last term in power, the Conservatives made significant cuts to the Canada Border Services Agency, which led to the elimination of more than 1,000 jobs. Their words today do not reflect their past actions.

For our part, we are taking meaningful steps to strengthen border security with Bill C-2. Are the Conservatives willing to work with us to make our borders safer and stronger?

[English]

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, unlike the member opposite, I am here to debate the safety of all Canadians, not engage in political games. My constituents are suffering more than I have ever seen in my life and need the government to focus on the criminals causing this, not crack down on the civil liberties of all Canadians. Bail reform is the biggest priority for keeping Canadians safe, so why is the Liberal government avoiding the topic and instead focusing on collecting Canadians' mail without a warrant?

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get my colleague's opinion. Earlier the member for Winnipeg North said that we should just take the Liberals' word for it that they believe in protecting the charter rights of Canadians for privacy, because in the 1980s they were the party that brought the charter in.

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Do we have to take the Liberals for granted on everything they campaigned on in the 1980s? They were against free trade then; is that also why we are not getting a deal with Trump on free trade today, because they are secretly still back in the 1980s and everything they were committed to then?

Perhaps my colleague from Cambridge can respond to the question about whether we can take the Liberals' campaign platform at its word or whether we should be looking back in time to see where the Liberals really stand on these issues.

● (1540)

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has a good point. A lot of people no longer trust the government after a decade of decay. It is truly depressing to see our seniors not even feeling safe in their own home because of the Liberal government's soft-on-crime agenda. With drugs having been let run so rampant in our communities, we are seeing drug addicts housed in seniors homes rather than getting them rehab or help. We see them getting drugs from either the government or their dealers while out on bail. Seeing drug dealers and violent gang members run free while our most vulnerable, our seniors, cower in their own home is truly depressing.

Just a few weeks ago, an elderly lady in Guelph was beaten, and died of her injuries, in broad daylight. This is not the Canada I grew up in. If we wonder about trust, we should look at the last 10 years.

Vince Gasparro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the hon. member, and I appreciate her concern.

We know that there has been a loophole in the code for decades, and the bad guys have been exploiting this within Canada Post. They have been shipping fentanyl and other illicit materials through Canada Post. With regard to the rules that our national security apparatus and police force have in terms of pulling packages off UPS and FedEx, they have not been able to do the same with Canada Post. We have to close that loophole.

What would you like us to do?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Please direct questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Cambridge has the floor.

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, I think that is the purpose of a warrant, and I think that is what Canadians are looking for, which is to keep their privacy in hand as well as look after the criminals.

If the government is serious about helping Canadians, it needs to separate the omnibus bill so we can come together to pass the few measures in it that would actually help, and leave the power grab portions to be debated separately. It would also add the bail reform Canadians have been begging for to keep drug traffickers off our streets.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member from Cambridge is a strong female member of Parliament, and I am excited to be serving with her.

I would like to talk a little bit about intimate partner violence. The member mentioned the effect that limiting cash under \$10,000 would have on seniors. I wonder whether she could comment on what that could mean for women trying to escape abuse.

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate working alongside our colleague.

As we know, just recently there was a death in B.C. that was horrendous. A woman dies every six days from murder. It is a huge issue and concern, and should be for all parties. To escape, there could be major costs and transactions involved. We have to keep all of these issues and debate this separately.

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in this debate on Bill C-2, the strong borders act. The government's number one responsibility is to keep families, children and our communities safe. We must bear this in mind as we analyze Bill C-2, an ambitious but necessary piece of legislation to correct a number of shortcomings observed over the years. This bill will help us address some of today's most pressing public safety risks.

The first thing everyone needs to understand is that this bill is part of and consistent with Canada's border plan. We appointed a fentanyl czar and added several cartels to the list of terrorist entities in the Criminal Code. In addition, we recruited 1,000 new customs officers and 1,000 new police officers. We have adopted advanced artificial intelligence technology, deployed drones and helicopters and brought in fentanyl-detecting dogs. More generally, we now have better coordination with our partners. Other measures to protect our communities will follow. These include the removal of assault weapons and making bail more difficult for repeat offenders convicted of violent crimes and certain other types of particularly repugnant crimes, such as breaking and entering into a home while people are present.

Law enforcement officers are doing their job, but until recently, they have been hampered by certain provisions of the law that have unduly complicated their work. In recent years, it has become clear that, in many circumstances, the law has hindered customs officers and RCMP investigators, preventing them from stopping crime and conducting investigations to punish those who break the law. Meanwhile, criminals have increasingly sophisticated equipment at their disposal and are constantly innovating with new tactics. In short, it is important to modernize the framework within which law enforcement operates to effectively combat the ever-evolving tactics of criminals, particularly transnational gangs.

Canadians care deeply about the rights and protections afforded to them by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The government heard that message loud and clear, which is why each section of the bill has been carefully considered. At the same time, Canadians expect the government to act effectively and send a clear message that it will never tolerate any form of crime, particularly crimes such as human trafficking. Making laws is one thing, but we must also provide the means by which to enforce them. This government is committed to enforcing these laws. It is a matter of fairness. In this country, the notion that crime pays will not be tolerated. It is therefore important to give law enforcement officers the means to do the job we expect them to do.

In order to accomplish that, first, when there are reasonable grounds to believe that a crime has been committed, peace officers must be able to better plan their investigations. More specifically, they must be able to communicate with public service providers without the need for prior judicial authorization. No actual personal information will be shared. Rather, peace officers will be able to find out whether the service provider provided services to the subscriber and, if so, whether the service provider has information regarding that person. If the peace officer wants to take things further, they must then go through the proper channels to get a warrant to get that information. The intention here is to enable law enforcement officers to fight crime effectively while ensuring that legal safeguards remain in place to protect access to personal information. As a result, I would like to reassure Canadians that the legislation complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as applied in the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling in *Bykovets* and the ruling rendered by Justice Boone of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The act also aims to stem the international flow of proceeds of crime and terrorist financing activities. Bill C-2 authorizes banks to collect and use personal information when they have reason to believe that certain transactions are a front for money laundering activities. The act also prevents third parties from depositing cash in amounts exceeding \$10,000. By making it harder to move money, it becomes harder for transnational organized crime to operate. This government is determined to take action on money laundering.

• (1545)

Similarly, Bill C-2 aims to get tough on the same international criminal organizations in a number of other ways. One of its major aims is to limit the flow of fentanyl to and from Canada. The bill allows the deployment of additional officers and provides tools to stop drugs from being imported and exported by mail. This will be especially useful in northern territories and rural municipalities where trafficking often occurs by regular mail, as my colleague, the member for Eglinton—Lawrence, explained so well. As things stand, letters cannot be inspected, even with a proper warrant. In cases where reasonable doubt exists, the bill proposes that mail now be opened.

Finally, the bill allows fentanyl precursor chemicals to be listed in the schedule of illicit substances to prevent them from entering Canada. To that end, there will be a new accelerated scheduling pathway that will enable the Department of Health to quickly list new products. New fentanyl precursors are appearing every month. If we want to intercept them at the border and ensure strict federal

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oversight, we need to have an up-to-date registry. With a new Canadian drug analysis centre, we will also be able to determine not only the content of these drugs, but also their origin, because of the chemical markers.

The overdose crisis continues to have a significant impact on Canadian families and communities across the country. The ravages of fentanyl are visible in all of our downtown urban cores. We need action. Even when illicit fentanyl use does not result in death, it causes serious and often permanent harm, especially among the most vulnerable members of society. Bill C-2 tackles the fentanyl problem head-on. As a physician, I know all too well that addiction is a complex problem, and there is no single or easy answer. However, reducing the availability of illicit drugs in our cities remains a key measure that no one should be questioning.

The bill also takes action in other areas, such as the illegal export of automobiles. Until now, customs efforts have focused on goods entering Canada. Going forward, the government wants to take even more drastic action by effectively cutting off the main market for car dealers, namely, the market outside Canada.

The bill also gives the Canadian Coast Guard a new role. Its current mandate is to ensure the safety of all mariners in Canadian waters. We are adding new responsibilities related to national security. From now on, the Coast Guard will be able to continuously monitor suspicious movements, patrol, and facilitate the interception of illegal shipments.

Finally, the bill facilitates the fight against sex offenders and child pornography on the Internet by enabling Canada to work better with its international partners.

The government is convinced that these measures are necessary to combat transnational crime in the 21st century, and it is not alone. Several organizations are saying the same thing, including the National Police Federation, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, which states that “[p]roposed changes by the federal government that would reduce barriers Canadian police face when investigating the growing number of online crimes...have the full support of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection”.

Bill C-2 reinforces Canadians' security by making major changes. It will prevent irregular migration and mass movements of people. Basically, it aims to protect the Canadian immigration process.

Our government's absolute priorities are protecting our communities and the prosperity of our economy. These priorities go hand in hand. A strong economy requires safe and secure borders. Our economy cannot prosper unless we introduce tough measures to fight crime. That is why I urge all members to support Bill C-2.

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• (1550)

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all agree that our borders must be strong, protected and secure. I am glad we agree on that because it is a topic that comes up a lot in the news. Canadians expect it, and our neighbours to the south have said so as well. They expect borders to be well protected.

Why has it come to this after 10 years? Is the government taking action today because people on both sides of the border now expect it to fulfill its responsibilities?

Why did it take 10 years of Liberal work to get to this point?

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his excellent question.

In fact, what we need to understand is that crime evolves, criminals' methods change, and organizations have become much more powerful; they are now transnational. There are actions that need to be taken that go beyond what used to be done. The courts are there to keep an eye on the government and tell it when it is going too far. That is why this bill addresses certain shortcomings that had been recognized by the courts.

I hope the members on the other side of the House will support us.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech made it clear that the government's priority is border security and the safety of Canadians. I would remind the House of the Prime Minister's promise in April, during an election campaign, to add 1,000 new border officers and new RCMP officers.

I have a simple question for my colleague. What concrete measures have been taken since those announcements? How many new officers have been hired at both the Canada Border Services Agency and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

• (1555)

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of hiring people. I do not have the exact figures, but I would be happy to share them.

Anyway, we are on track to fill these gaps, and we will be hiring people as they graduate. I will actually be attending a graduation ceremony next month on October 26. New graduates are on the way. We look forward to hiring them and putting them to work to better protect Canadians.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech on Bill C-2.

I am very happy to be working with him as part of a team that is committed to making our borders safer and cracking down on fentanyl trafficking and auto theft.

Why is Bill C-2 important to the beautiful riding he represents, La Prairie—Atateken?

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, La Prairie—Atateken is indeed a very beautiful riding.

Our riding is no different from the rest of Canada. It has problems, too. Economic growth will go hand in hand with keeping people safe and healthy. In today's world, people face all kinds of challenges around mental health, physical health and safety.

I am pleased to be contributing to this noble objective and to be making life even better for the people of La Prairie—Atateken.

[English]

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety seems to admit that there is a serious fentanyl crisis. However, in his own department's 2025-26 plan, the word fentanyl does not even appear once. I am sure he has had conversations with the minister on this. Can he explain why?

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, the measures at the border are working. We have reduced smuggling. This month, barely half a kilogram was seized at Canada's borders. The hard work is paying off. We will win our fight against fentanyl.

It is also important that we continue our work across the country to keep people safe. As I said, substance abuse is a complex issue. There is no easy solution, but we are continuing to invest in the health and safety of Canadians.

[English]

Gaëtan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a region that is often overlooked in national conversation, but is, in truth, central to the future of Ontario and Canada. The history of the Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk riding, one of the largest in Canada, is a story of resilience, hard work and vibrant cultural heritage forged by people who built not just industries but lives, families and futures in the north.

The riding is not simply a geographic expanse in northern Ontario. It is a living and working landscape that tells the story of Canada's development. It is its natural wealth, linguistic diversity, an enduring relationship with its resources. This is not a region on the margins. It is a region that has long delivered for the country and stands ready to lead again.

[Translation]

The riding of Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk is a land of endurance, pride, and solidarity. It has been shaped by generations of workers and families from the north, who have built not just industries, but also strong communities and a sustainable future for their children. It is a unique region where languages, traditions, and identities come together every day.

Here, French is not a secondary language, but rather a living language, a working language, and a language of the heart. Our bilingualism is an integral part of our daily lives, our economy, and our future. It must be protected and recognized as a strength for our region, for Ontario, and for Canada. Our riding has never been relegated to the background. For decades, it was central to the country's economy, and it will continue to play a vital role in the future.

• (1600)

[English]

Our modest population of approximately 95,000 people is diverse and multinational. For 125 years, our people have lived and worked, producing astounding economic outputs that I will outline shortly. First, it is important to appreciate some of the history of this great riding.

Visionaries defined corridors into our region, followed by the main building project we know today as the Canadian National Railway, joined by the Ontario Northland railway, with connections to the Canadian Pacific Railway via the Algoma Central Railway. In building this infrastructure, our forebears discovered the sheer vastness of the riding, stretching from the Atlantic to the Arctic watershed, blessed with healthy boreal forest. Soon it became clear that the riding's five major river basins could thunderously generate over four gigawatts of sustainable hydroelectric power. Approximately 850 megawatts of that power has supported forestry, mining, industry and local communities. Most importantly, these basins continue to provide renewable, pollution-free energy.

As the railroads advanced, farms and communities developed along the lines, supplying and servicing an industrious population. Prospectors followed, discovering an extraordinary wealth of minerals. Three major paper mills supplied U.S. markets, including The New York Times, with newsprint, and even America's first kleenex, which was produced in Kapuskasing.

[Translation]

A short time later, with the government's visionary support, the Trans-Canada Highway project extended this infrastructure across the riding. Although launched in the 1950s, this national construction project remains to be completed and modernized to allow a smoother and safer flow of traffic.

That said, the Trans-Canada Highway corridor, known back home as Highway 11, has already encouraged other innovations to develop along its path, whether in energy transportation, pipelines, communications or supply chain logistics.

[English]

These achievements were possible thanks to the guidance of the first nations, the vision of risk-taking entrepreneurs, the dedication of multinational Canadians and the support of responsive governments.

Over the years, our region has hosted more than 50 mines and two of the largest staking rushes in world history, helping to build the Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver stock exchanges. The wealth generated supported major national projects, such as the financing of the construction of the Maple Leaf Gardens, and produced NHL greats who became household names. Indeed, titans of the industry

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of the day, including the Thomson, Eaton, Bronfman, Massey and Brookfield empires, can trace their fortunes to our region, along with the capital that spurred oil exploration across Canada.

The mining sector alone has been extraordinary. Mines in our riding have produced over 110 million ounces of gold, 215 million ounces of silver, six million tonnes of zinc, four million tonnes of copper, 330,000 tonnes of lead, 50,000 tonnes of nickel and 200,000 tonnes of talc, with an economic value of \$580 billion in today's money, and they will continue to produce.

Exploration continues to this day. Current projects have identified over five billion tonnes of nickel, precious metals and critical mineral ore reserves worth over \$1 trillion, with a further 12 billion tonnes of reserves under review, positioning our region as a cornerstone for Canada's future manufacturing needs. These developments, with extraction using cutting-edge carbon capture techniques, will contribute to reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide well into the next century.

Our forests have long been properly and sustainably managed, with an average annual harvest of 4.5 million cubic metres from 12 operating sawmills. Modern practices and improved tree species could potentially double this harvest, aligning with Canada's climate goal and growing demand for recyclable products. For example, replacing plastic bags with paper could revive pulp production and put another line of pulp at Kap Paper in Kapuskasing.

Agriculture is also thriving, to the tune of \$140 million per year, with grain, hay, livestock and cash crops well established in the great clay belt of northeastern Ontario, with access to transportation infrastructure, which provides enormous opportunities for agribusiness. Indeed, university scholars have said that the great clay belt will become Canada's next agricultural breadbasket.

I hope I have conveyed the scale of the economic treasure box our region represents. However, realizing its full potential requires collaboration with our 11 first nations, by working together on infrastructure, roads, energy and railroads. We can unlock jobs, attract skilled workers and revitalize the 46 communities of the riding.

Let us make Canada's north a beacon of opportunity for all by not forgetting that 95% of our greatest resource is us, Canadians. Our corner of Canada is one of the most linguistically and culturally distinct regions in the country. While the francophone identity runs deep, nearly half the population has knowledge of both official languages. This dual linguistic character is an asset for the future and should be supported by federal policy.

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I am excited that these social and economic developments will benefit not only our riding but also every Canadian. I am committed to rising to this challenge for the benefit of my constituents and all of Canada.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was thrilled to hear my colleague's summary. He told us how Canada was built through big projects like the railway and the Trans-Canada Highway.

I am curious to know my colleague's reaction to the new high-speed rail project between Toronto and Montreal, and the economic boom it will generate. This is exactly the kind of thing he was telling us about.

Gaétan Malette: Mr. Speaker, I did indeed explain how Canada developed. That is the approach we must take in the future. No matter the project, the important thing is how we build our country. We did it once, but we need to build it again because right now, things are not going well.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I really like the part in his speech when he said that French is not a secondary language in Canada. Quebec's motto is *Je me souviens*, or I remember. I would like to remind my colleague that it was the Conservative Party, under Stephen Harper, that appointed a unilingual anglophone auditor general, unilingual anglophone Supreme Court justices and a unilingual anglophone foreign affairs minister. I will give my colleague the benefit of the doubt. I hope that he will share the following good news with his anglophone colleagues. French is not secondary language in this beautiful, bilingual Canada.

The question I want to ask my colleague is the following. When the Harper government was in power, it planned to cut staff at the Canada Border Services Agency. The Conservative Party is currently in the opposition and wants to ensure border security and it wants more border officers. That was not one of its priorities when it was in government, but it is a priority now that it is in the opposition. Why?

• (1610)

Gaétan Malette: Mr. Speaker, first, I spoke about the situation in my riding, where French is a living language and 50% of the population works in both official languages.

Second, it is much more difficult to survive in our language outside of Quebec. What we have accomplished is extraordinary.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk.

In his wonderful speech, he spoke about agriculture in his region. This week, we have heard a lot about food inflation and the rising cost of housing.

When it comes to agriculture, I would like to ask my colleague what he thinks about improving our food sovereignty in Canada.

Gaétan Malette: Mr. Speaker, agriculture all but disappeared in my region during colonization, in the 1920s and 1930s and in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, but it is now making a comeback. The

wonderful thing about this is that we are feeding ourselves. We have everything we need in my region.

The most important thing is the great clay belt. Agricultural experts are saying that this will be the next big agricultural region in Canada. That is great news for people in my riding. Along with the rest of Canada, we are able to feed our people.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on the bill itself. If the Conservatives wanted to show goodwill in dealing with and improving border security, along with other issues related to it, they could actually allow the bill to go to a committee, where it could be further debated and talked about, with amendments proposed.

If they do not want it to go to a committee right away, would he not agree that it may be advisable to share some of the possible amendments that the Conservatives have?

Gaétan Malette: Mr. Speaker, the only answer I have is that the problem was created by the Liberals. The intent of my speech today was to give Canadians confidence that we have a great country, with all the resources we need to survive and to be independent. I am speaking to them.

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as it is my first intervention with you being in the chair, I want to congratulate you and also the constituents of Perth—Wellington for electing you. I am very happy to have you in the chair.

I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-2, the strong borders act. This important bill would help keep Canadians safe by strengthening our borders, fighting organized crime and protecting the fairness of our immigration system. Our government is taking strong action to deal with serious challenges, such as drug smuggling, auto theft, money laundering, and abuse of our asylum and visa systems. We are also giving law enforcement and border officers more tools to stop these crimes.

Canada is a country that welcomes people from around the world. Immigrants and refugees have helped build our communities. As a proud immigrant myself, I know how important it is that our immigration system is fair, strong and trusted, but we also know that Canada's immigration system is under pressure. Global conflicts are bringing more people to our borders, and sometimes the system is being misused by those who are not truly in need of the protection that they claim. That is why Bill C-2 includes important changes to protect the integrity of our asylum system.

One of the key changes would be who can make a refugee claim in Canada. Going forward, international students and temporary foreign workers who have been in Canada for more than one year would not be able to claim asylum. Let me be clear. This is not a ban on asylum. People who truly need protection would still have access to a special review process before they were to be removed from Canada. If there were any risk of persecution or harm, Canada would not send them back. This change would stop people from staying in Canada for years as students or temporary workers and then trying to use the asylum system as a last option.

A refugee system must be used for those who need protection, not as a backup plan. These changes are fair, and they would help speed up the asylum process for individuals who need safety. They would also help us reduce backlogs and focus our resources on those who need it.

The bill would also improve how we share immigration information with provinces and territories so that all orders of government could better manage services and public safety. The strong borders act also targets immigration fraud and the abuse of our visa system. It would give our officers strong tools to catch fake documents and false claims. It would also help us go after criminals who take advantage of newcomers through fraud and exploitation. These actions are about fairness. They would protect the integrity of our system and the honest people who follow the rules.

Bill C-2 also includes new steps to fight crime, drugs and money laundering. We are investing \$1.3 billion to help border officers stop stolen vehicles, seize illegal goods and improve inspections at rail yards and ports. This is the largest investment in border security in Canadian history. The bill would also give the Canadian Coast Guard a new role in keeping our coastlines secure in helping to stop smuggling at sea, protect our borders and work with police to fight organized crime.

We are also taking strong action to protect children by improving the way we share information about sex offenders with police in Canada and around the world. This would help stop child exploitation and trafficking.

• (1615)

We are cracking down on money laundering and terrorist financing. This would make it harder for criminals to hide their money and easier for police to get the financial information they need to stop crime. We are also limiting large cash deposits and banning third-party cash deposits to help prevent criminal activity.

One of the most serious threats facing Canada is the rise of lethal drugs such as fentanyl. This deadly drug is killing thousands of people across the country. That is why Bill C-2 would give new powers to law enforcement to stop the flow of chemicals used to make fentanyl. It would also allow officers to search suspicious packages in the mail, with a warrant, and shut down illegal drug operations more quickly. These actions would help save lives and make our communities safer.

As part of our effort to stop auto theft, the bill would allow border officers to access railways and shipping ports where many stolen cars are smuggled out of the country. This is a growing problem that affects many cities throughout Canada. These new powers

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would help us recover more stolen vehicles and break up international crime rings.

This bill is not only about stronger laws, but also about building a safer Canada, a Canada where people feel safe in their homes, in their workplaces and in their communities, a Canada where newcomers are welcomed but expected to follow the rules, a Canada where our immigration system is protected and our borders are secure. Canadians expect a strong, fair system that puts safety and honesty first.

We are keeping our doors open to people in need, but we are closing the doors to fraud, abuse and crime. Others may worry that this will hurt people who are vulnerable, but I want to be very clear. Canada's humanitarian efforts will remain strong. We will continue to protect those who are at risk, and our refugee system will continue to be fair and compassionate, but we must protect the system itself, so it can continue to serve those who truly need it.

The strong borders act is a smart, balanced and responsible plan. It would give our law enforcement and border officers the tools they need. It would protect our economy, our communities and our values. Most importantly, it would protect Canada's future.

I was talking to colleagues here in the House, and we heard support at a policing summit in B.C. in August for Bill C-2, because those are the people who are the first responders. We should be listening to the people who are there to save our lives and save our communities.

I urge all members across all political stripes in the House to join me in supporting Bill C-2. Let us stand together for safer communities, stronger borders and a fairer immigration system for all.

• (1620)

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Surrey Newton for outlining some of the key provisions in Bill C-2.

One aspect of the bill he did not touch upon is access to online data, the impact this would have on privacy regulations in Canada and the fundamental right that our party believes all Canadians have access to, which is a fundamental right to privacy. I believe this bill would undermine that fundamental right.

Does the member opposite agree that this bill would go too far in giving powers to authorities in respect to access to information?

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Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr Speaker, if we listen to the experts, even organizations such as the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, they are telling us that they need these tools and resources to protect Canadians. There is nothing in this bill that would take rights or liberties away, but it would make sure that criminals are punished.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about border security. That is all well and good, but things have gotten to this point thanks to 10 years of Liberal neglect. Now, the people protecting the border, the customs officers, are telling us, through their union, that we could need up to 3,000 more officers at the border. Meanwhile, the government has promised 1,000. This was not even mentioned in the throne speech, and so far, not a single officer has been hired.

My question is twofold. First, I would like to know how it is that the Prime Minister has had time to announce funding for defence, to travel around the world four times and purchase submarines, but has not had time to hire the 2,000 to 3,000 officers needed. Second, I would like to know why the bill does not include any provisions allowing customs officers to patrol between border crossings, as requested by the community, along the longest demilitarized border in the world.

[English]

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I personally believe that the hon. member for Mirabel was talking about the Conservative government. When it was in power, it took 1,000 officers away from the job. In fact, it is the Liberal government that brought in 1,000 new law enforcement and CBSA officers to make sure our borders are protected with utmost urgency.

• (1625)

Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is a member in the House who does not have a story they can share from their community or who has not been touched by the issues of fentanyl, opioids and the flow of precursors. There is the Tablotney family in Richmond, who I had the opportunity to table a petition for, and they were asking for a sustainable, national ad campaign to raise awareness of this at all times. I have spoken to police officers who have shown us data of some of these chemicals they are finding on the street.

The member from Surrey Newton has been a strong advocate on public safety measures. Can he let us know what the pathway is to stop these precursors from coming into Canada?

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the hon. member for Richmond East—Steveston for all the great work he does and the support he provides.

We need to make sure that British Columbians are safe when it comes to fentanyl. This is why we are bringing in Bill C-2, so that we are able to stop the flow of fentanyl across the border, and bringing in searching the mail and other options in this bill to stop it.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had a different beginning to my speech, but after hearing all the long-serving Liberal MPs get up and talk about how great it is that they

have finally discovered our border is an issue, that after 10 years in government they are taking some action with this piece of legislation and should be congratulated for it is a bit of an astounding proposition at the beginning of this fall session.

They waited so long to take any action that fentanyl and other drugs are rampant throughout the country, not just in the big urban spaces but in the smallest of the small communities across my riding in rural southwestern Manitoba and in every other riding across the country. I do not know that they are going to get as much sympathy and applause from Canadians as they expect based on their speeches today. They let this go on for 10 years without taking any recognizable action to stop the flow of illegal substances from other countries into this country. Now they think it is wonderful that they have finally come up with a half-decent, but very problematic in some instances, proposal to address this situation.

I will get back to my speech. I will have more to say on that as we proceed.

Brandon—Souris, in the context of the country, is a border riding. There are nine ports of entry in my constituency alone, a number of which have just had their hours reduced, which is impacting trade with our American counterparts. Plus Lake Metigoshe is in my riding. It sits right on the border. It is shared, half Canadian and half American, and is policed by both entities. It is one of the few lakes where people can get in their boats on the Canadian side and drive them across to the American side without having to go through a port of entry per se. It is one of very few examples where that exists in the country.

It is the part of the border that is all-accessible, unlike other parts of the country, like Alberta and British Columbia. There are 226 kilometres of border between Manitoba and North Dakota in my constituency, 302 kilometres if one takes the highway.

We also have the International Peace Garden at the second-largest border crossing in Manitoba, in Boissevain, or the peace garden border crossing if people come from the American side, which shares a monument to peace that both of our countries share and maintain. They also share a cross-border airport. People can actually land on the North Dakota side, the American side, taxi onto Canadian soil and then disembark. It is one of the few instances where that takes place in the country as well. Certainly, my riding shares the border. It is a border constituency, and our economic ties with our immediate partners to the south, North Dakota, and further south into the Midwest states are significant. They are close.

When I grew up, Minot, North Dakota, was just as close for me and my family in our hometown as Winnipeg, the major city in Manitoba. We would often spend family vacations, special birthdays or anniversaries travelling to Minot rather than Winnipeg to share in our collective relationship with the Americans. When we talk about border issues, we know that Manitobans, and certainly southwestern Manitobans, deal, work, live and play crossing that border on a regular basis.

My constituents believe in law and order and a strong border. They have made that very clear to me. During the election and over the course of the summer, I held a number of community barbecues along Highway 3, which is Manitoba's southernmost major highway that runs parallel to the American-Canadian border. I held community barbecues in Melita, Boissevain and Manitou, all border towns. In fact, the Boissevain local hockey team is called the Boissevain Border Kings. That is how close our relationship is in my constituency to the border and its impact on Manitoba's economy.

These are ongoing conversations that take place on a regular basis. People are living the challenges with the border and the relationship that is ongoing between our two countries. For the past decade, Conservatives have been urging the Liberal government to reverse its failed policies and restore safety to our communities.

● (1630)

My communities are at the forefront of the influx of weak border and weak criminal justice policy from the Liberal government. We have seen an influx of crime and drugs infesting small communities in southwestern Manitoba, further up into my colleague from Riding Mountain's constituency and further north into northern Manitoba. These are communities that are collectively calling for better action from the government and calling out its failure to deliver safety and a solution to the influx of drugs. Instead, the Liberals, as we know, have let the situation get out of control.

Now they are scrambling and have put forward this omnibus bill that falls well short of protecting Canadians while overreaching in other areas. While we are prepared to support some elements of the bill, we are very concerned with others. The bill fails to address bail reform, which is a topic that comes up often in this Parliament. Catch and release is alive and well for those who are trafficking fentanyl and firearms across our border, using our porous border to victimize Canadians. These are illegal firearms, not the legally held firearms that so many of my constituents have taken the courses for, have trained for and responsibly own and use.

There is no mention of sentencing provisions. There are still no mandatory prison times for fentanyl traffickers who are profiting from this weak, porous border the Liberals have created. There are still no new mandatory prison times for gangsters who use guns and commit crimes, despite the Liberals' campaign against legal firearms owners. House arrest is still permissible for some of the most serious offenders in these areas.

We are deeply concerned by the Liberals' further restrictions on Canadian civil liberties, including the ability to open mail without oversight and to compel Internet companies to hand over private information, and warrantless searches.

I would just like to pause here for a minute. I do not know that anybody in my riding, even the Canada Post workers I represent, think it is a great idea for them to just be able to open up mail at will. This is what the Liberals, despite what some of them have said today, are proposing in this piece of legislation. Nobody thinks that is a good idea, even the Canada Post workers I talked to in my constituency when we knew this bill would be coming up. It is way overboard. They have no reason for it to be done. RCMP officers think it is ridiculous.

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There is no question that there needs to be a solution and a proposal put forward to deal with trafficking of illegal substances through Canada Post, but it makes perfect sense for these systems to be operated through the court system and with trained investigators and police officers opening up this mail, searching for illegal substances, because if they actually find some, they are the ones who are trained to handle it, not Canada Post workers.

Again, this is the Liberals making a mountain where they should have taken a scalpel in terms of how to deal with these serious, prolific traffickers who are utilizing Canada Post. It needs to be referred to the proper justice officials, not to our everyday postal workers and the folks working in the distribution centres.

While Conservatives have been ignored by the Liberal government and its failures, we have consistently fought for practical, effective policies that secure our borders, protect our communities and uphold Canadians' rights, including adding thousands of border agents; extending CBSA powers along the entire border, not just crossings; and installing border surveillance towers as well as truck-mounted drone systems to spot border incursions.

This is huge in my riding, which is all very accessible along a very rural area that does not have high levels of population. These scanners can also see through walls of containers or vehicles to spot drugs, guns and stolen cars. We have fought for tracking departures so government officials know which deportees are in Canada illegally, toughening penalties for repeat violent offenders, ending catch-and-release bail and house arrest for violent criminals, and the list goes on.

The Liberals, which I have heard already today, have gotten up and said the Conservatives have no solutions. We have been proposing these solutions for 10 years, and there has been no action from the Liberal government to implement a single one of them.

With some of these provisions, they have finally got it right after a decade of failing Canadians on protecting them and securing the border. Now they are saying to trust them. Well, gosh, they have had 10 years to fix the immigration system; that has been a disaster. They have had 10 years to fix the criminal justice system; that has been a disaster. Why should Canadians believe today that the Liberal government's record is going to be any different in fixing the problems it created on Canada's border?

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• (1635)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer I got the opportunity to attend the summit of the chiefs of police and was able to sit down with the president. He had rave reviews for Bill C-2. One of the provisions of lawful access in Bill C-2 changes the requirement from “reasonable grounds to believe” and instead makes it “reasonable grounds to suspect”. This is going to help the police in so many different child exploitation investigations.

I have a slew of different examples the police gave me where cases were not investigated and were thrown out. One example was of a father who caught his 12-year-old daughter speaking to someone who said they were a teenager but ended up being an adult. The father had an IP address and took it to the police. The police are not able to do anything about that IP address today, but with Bill C-2, they would be able to take one step forward and lay charges.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I heard a question from the parliamentary secretary. I too have met with chiefs of police in my home province. As I said in my speech, there are some provisions in this bill where the Liberals did get a few things right. Members know the whole thing where a blind squirrel finds a nut every once in a while. They did get a few things right in this bill, but they also got lots wrong.

While we are going to propose constructive criticism and amendments to this piece of legislation, we are also going to call the Liberals out where they got it wrong. That was the premise of my speech today. We hope the Liberals are going to correct what they got wrong and actually do a better job of fixing a system that they broke, just like countless other systems across the federal government.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I salute my colleague and congratulate him on his speech. One interesting thing about Bill C-2 is that border services officers will not even be allowed to patrol between certain sectors. That will make them less effective.

I just want my colleague's opinion. Does he agree that they should be more effective and that the officers, though too few in number, should be allowed to patrol between border crossings?

[English]

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, that is certainly the case. Obviously, we know that many areas of eastern Canada as well as farther west of me are very inaccessible along our border. Even in Manitoba, the area is so large that despite it being accessible, the RCMP is far too short-staffed to be able to patrol all of that area at any given time. Absolutely, we believe in expanding jurisdiction there. We think that would be an important solution to part of the issue with Canada's border.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Brandon—Souris for his eloquent words. There is something missing, a lot missing, in Bill C-2, and I would like to know what he thinks of this.

I want to ask about the member for Surrey Newton, who spoke previously. A very important thing that is missing in this bill is what the Liberals are going to do about the decriminalization of drugs in B.C. There is no mention of it, and people are dying every day. They talk about finding fentanyl; they talk about finding drugs through mail. What about decriminalizing drugs in one province to see how many people die?

• (1640)

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, along with other colleagues from British Columbia, has more first-hand experience with this than I do. From what I have read, it has been just devastating. The result of that policy by the NDP government, enabled by the federal Liberal team, has been devastating for families and for communities. It has been a total train wreck, in my opinion.

I did everything I could as a provincial politician to urge the NDP government in Manitoba to not follow suit with that disastrous policy. Thankfully, to date, it has not done so. I would strongly support any initiative that recriminalizes those types of substances. Hopefully, no province will ever try that disastrous experiment again.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Employment; the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, Justice; the hon. member for Northumberland—Clarke, Intergovernmental Affairs.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many MPs have spoken about different aspects of the very lengthy Bill C-2 today. This afternoon, I rise to focus on just four small words whose removal from the Canada Post Corporation Act would transform this bill from being an act that promises security into one that delivers surveillance. Those words are “other than a letter”.

Under the current Canada Post Corporation Act, Canada Post may open any mail other than a letter if it has reasonable grounds to suspect certain things about the parcel, including, for example, that it contains “non-mailable matter”. The Liberals will tell us that the removal of those four words is about stopping fentanyl. They will tell us it is about organized crime. They will tell us not to worry because police still need a warrant if they want to use the letter as evidence in a criminal trial. They may even tell us that we have nothing to worry about if we are not committing a crime. However, non-mailable matter, under the act, covers far more than just illicit drugs, and there would be no requirement in the legislation to get a warrant before going fishing through people's mail. All Canada Post would need is reasonable grounds to suspect that the item is non-mailable.

Non-mailable matter goes far beyond fentanyl and other illicit substances. It includes, for example, perishable goods. It includes things that do not meet Canada Post's physical or marking requirements. It is actually a very broad concept.

Canada Post defines a letter as much more than just a piece of paper in an envelope. A letter, under the act, includes any paper information weighing less than 500 grams, which is half a kilogram, delivered to a specific addressee that includes a message or information in any form, and it does not even have to be enclosed in an envelope. Bill C-2 could have made a distinction between what we think of as a letter and larger items that meet the technical definition of a letter in the act but are not actually a letter. Whether that reflects sloppy drafting or something else, the net effect of the deletion of these four little words would be far more than a technical amendment to postal operations. It would strike at the heart of our constitutional right to privacy and the trust that underpins our entire postal system.

A sealed letter is not just another object in the mail stream. It is a private conversation on paper, a direct, sometimes intimate exchange. Parcels contain goods. Letters carry thoughts, medical updates, legal documents and family news. Opening a letter is not like inspecting a box of merchandise. It is like eavesdropping on a private conversation in someone's home. That is why the Supreme Court of Canada has consistently held that mail attracts a high expectation of privacy under section 8 of the charter, which guarantees the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure. It is also why section 187 of the Criminal Code prohibits intercepting private communications without judicial authorization, which is a warrant.

Privacy is essential to liberty. Our charter, our Criminal Code and repeated Supreme Court of Canada rulings all recognize that a sealed letter sent through a government postal service attracts a high expectation of privacy, yet Bill C-2 suggests that the government disagrees with that. The current framework is a deliberate balance. Canada Post can inspect parcels, when needed, to enforce customs rules or keep dangerous goods out of circulation, and then it can alert law enforcement to get a warrant if there are reasonable grounds to believe an offence has occurred or will occur and that evidence of the offence will be found at the location to be searched. However, no one, and I mean no one, can pry open a sealed letter unless a judge has first issued a warrant based on reasonable grounds. This bill would change that, and it smacks of government overreach.

● (1645)

If the government had wanted to accomplish its goals with minimal impairment, if it had wanted to put small parcels that qualify as mail on the same footing as larger parcels, it could have made a distinction between letters as we know them and something thicker, or small packages that are under 500 grams that still fit through the letter slot at the post office. However, it did not. Even then, by the way, it would have had to reckon with the fact that at least one court in Canada has already held that the provision it is trying to change violates the charter's privacy rights.

This is a change we disagree with vehemently. This change is a litigation magnet, and I submit that the courts are going to spend millions of Canadians' taxpayer dollars litigating it, with little chance of success. Therefore, I rise today to ask the government to please abandon its effort to take those four little words out of the act.

Government Orders

During the long summer recess the government gave us, I spoke with and heard from many community members in my riding on this issue. They do not want to see this change. Allowing Canada Post to open letters would erode the public trust on which the postal service depends at a time when the postal service, quite frankly, cannot afford to lose more of the public trust. It is unnecessary. If there are genuine safety concerns with small packages under 500 grams that fit through a letter slot, modern, non-intrusive screening exists: X-ray imaging, chemical detection and targeted investigation under judicial oversight. These tools protect the public while respecting constitutional rights. Blanket powers, on the other hand, worry the public and invite abuse.

That is why the four little words "other than a letter" are so powerful. Do we as a free and democratic society accept that others may open and perhaps read our private letters without a judge's authorization or before a judge's authorization? If yes, we normalize warrantless intrusion into one of our most intimate forms of communication. If no, we reaffirm that privacy is not a privilege but a right that is central to our values and fundamental to the relationship between citizen and state.

The government has no business rifling through the private letters of Canadians. Our Constitution, our statutes and our shared values say the same thing: A sealed letter is sacred. It deserves the same constitutional respect as the home from which it came and the home to which it is bound.

I urge all members of this House to reject any proposal that weakens that protection. Let us preserve the trust that has carried Canadians' words, hopes and memories across this country for generations. To borrow a phrase familiar to every household, when it comes to our letters, the only thing that should be opened is the mailbox.

● (1650)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I met with Commissioner Carrique this summer at the summit I was talking about, he pointed out to me that today, a letter under 500 grams that could contain something like fentanyl is not subject to a search warrant. This bill would allow it to be subject to a search warrant. I would remind the member across that 200 milligrams can be deadly to humans. We need to tackle the crisis of fentanyl in our country, and we need to give police the tools necessary to do so.

Would the member not agree that we need to provide our policing agencies with the tools necessary to fight fentanyl?

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Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, I live in a community that is deeply affected by the addictions crisis, and I share the government's desire to stop fentanyl in its tracks. We propose to treat fentanyl dealers as murderers. The government proposes to allow all Canadians' mail to be opened in the hope of finding things in it. I will leave it to Canadians watching this debate at home to decide which would be more effective.

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

The minister just mentioned something when she asked my colleague a question about fentanyl. The Liberals talk about tackling fentanyl, yet under the Liberals, people who traffic fentanyl can serve their sentences at home. Guns and drugs go hand in hand, and with Bill C-5, the Liberals allowed people to serve their sentence on house arrest for drive-by shootings.

I wonder if my hon. colleague would agree with me that it is a bit rich for the Liberals to now want to tackle fentanyl through the mail with these measures when they will not get hard on the issues that are killing people today, the drugs and guns.

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, I echo my colleague's sentiments. I am not sure that I have an answer that would disagree with him.

With respect to fentanyl, I would like the government to act with a broad array of measures. I ran on a promise to bring our loved ones home drug-free. What I would really like to see the government do is commit to providing the funding that would allow us to provide the treatment and recovery beds we need in our ridings to do that.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could be clear on this point. Today, if I put a letter in the mailbox and there is fentanyl in it, Canada Post has a legal obligation to deliver that letter to wherever it is going in Canada. Let us say for the sake of argument that for a law enforcement agency to open that letter, it would require a warrant and it gets a warrant to open it. Does she, or the Conservative Party, support that principle?

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, of course I support the process that currently exists where law enforcement has to get warrants to search people's property, including their mail. To the extent that those in law enforcement have reasonable grounds to believe that a crime has been committed or is going to be committed, they already have the tools to do that in a court of law. I am not sure what the member thinks he is adding through this change.

• (1655)

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP knows where thousands of these drug labs are across Canada, so I do not think it would be that hard of a process to get the warrant needed to search for products.

Does the member not agree that there are already measures in place that can be used? If the government had the will in the tone it is setting for how it treats drugs in this country, that would be of great help as well.

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, regulatory search powers often overlap with law enforcement. This is a question of whether we inspect first and then get a warrant or we get a warrant and then inspect. The law as it stands is fine and clear.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in June, Canadians pleaded with the Liberal government to keep Parliament open and deliver real bail reform. Its members refused, and they went on vacation. While they were away, tragedy multiplied: A three-year-old girl was assaulted in her own bed, a boy was killed by a stray bullet as he slept in his mother's arms, a father was slain while defending his family and a grandmother was murdered for her car. Each story is a heartbreak. Each one is a question: Why was the Liberals' vacation more important than protecting Canadians from crime?

Now Parliament is finally back. It is day two, and what does the government put first? It is not violent crime, not unemployment, not the cost of living and not housing affordability. Instead, the Liberals rushed forward with a bill to let the state seize our mail without a warrant and to reach into our digital life unnecessarily and without oversight. However, when I walk the streets of Newmarket—Aurora, when I knock on doors, I do not hear calls for broader surveillance powers. I hear a mother in tears, telling me that she no longer feels safe in her own home. I read emails and take calls from neighbours who tell me, with desperation, that they no longer feel safe in their home, in their streets and in their country.

Canadians are asking, "Can I feed my family? Will my children ever be able to afford a home? Are our streets safe?" That is what weighs on the people's hearts, and yet the government answers with an omnibus bill that ignores their pleas and fiddles with their freedoms.

Violent crime is up 50%. Gang-related homicide is up 75%. Extortion is up 357%. Auto theft is up 46%. Crimes against children are up 119%. Every percentage point is not a number; it is a person, a life upended, a family scarred.

There are parts of the bill where we find common ground. We support tougher measures to combat fentanyl. We support expanding the sex offenders registry so police can prevent the most horrific crimes. We support stronger powers for law enforcement to stop predators and for the CBSA to stop money laundering and terrorist financing. These are urgent issues that could pass now, but the government went further. The Liberals bundled urgent, non-contentious issues with controversial ones that overreach.

Section 8 of our charter is clear: Canadians are protected against unlawful search and seizure. The protection must come before the state acts, not after. The private information of Canadians sent through the mail should never be handed to the government without a warrant. That would be a clear breach of confidentiality.

Let us think about what we entrust to the mail: mail-in ballots, confidential files and financial statements. Where is the line? Where is the respect for Canadians' civil liberties? When I hear of a government's screening mail, I do not think of a western democracy; I think of a place where the state controls and where people are afraid to speak their mind. That is not Canada, yet that is exactly what the bill proposes.

The reality is that criminals are savvy. They adapt, they shift, they change and they will. We have already seen cases of pigeons delivering drugs in B.C., and we know that the use of drones is rapidly growing. Criminals will find other ways, and what will be left behind? It will be ordinary Canadians with their liberties, civil liberties, stripped away, and their private letters, their ballots, their most personal information left open to the government's eyes, not through due process, not with a warrant but with a will.

• (1700)

That is not the Canada we know. That is not the Canada we should ever accept. The bill offers no real oversight, no safeguards and no consequences for abuse. Canadians know this: Once liberties are handed away, they are rarely returned.

There is something else tucked inside the bill, quiet but troubling: restrictions on the use of cash. For generations, cash has been more than a currency. It has been independence. It has been a safeguard for seniors who do not bank online; for small businesses that still trade hand to hand, predominantly in the retail sector; and for families who rely on it in times of emergency.

The Liberal government once froze Canadians' bank accounts. Now it moves to limit the cash in their pockets. That is not financial modernization; that is control. Cash is not the problem; criminals are. Canadians deserve to know why a government that cannot control its spending is so eager to control how Canadians spend.

Canadians deserve a Parliament that deals with real concerns: safe streets, affordable living and stable jobs, while preserving the liberties that define us. Conservatives will support practical, effective measures that protect families, that support stronger borders, tougher penalties and real action against fentanyl, but we will not support a government that uses fear as a cover for overreach and that buries necessary policy inside sweeping new powers.

Let us pass what unites us, let us set aside what divides us and let us spend the chamber's precious time on the things that Canadians

are truly asking of us: safety, prosperity and freedom. That is where Conservatives will stand.

Government Orders

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member that safety is paramount and of concern to Canadians. That is why the second bill we tabled in the current Parliament was Bill C-2. Bail reform and sentencing reforms are also upcoming this fall.

However, I would like to know whether the member is supportive of Bill C-2, as she did not reference it too much in her speech. I would love to know whether she is supportive of the extra measures and tools that we are giving our law enforcement. The bill was created from recommendations from officers who serve on the front lines.

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, I very clearly laid out my concerns with the bill, predominantly around the violation of civil liberties for Canadians and government overreach and its desire for control. That is what we do not agree with.

The reality is that criminals will adapt, and they will adapt quickly. They will change their methods. We have seen pigeons and drones. Left behind will be ordinary, law-abiding Canadians with their liberties violated. We will never support that.

• (1705)

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for this heartfelt, compassionate, thoughtful speech. I am proud to be part of a caucus that cares that our loved ones come home.

We talk about borders. A member who spoke previously talked about living in a border town. All day I have heard members on the opposite side telling us how proud they are that this is the most money ever promised to be spent on border security. They are so proud of that.

However, I have to ask, and I think the member can comfortably comment, why are we in the place we are right now, where we have to spend that kind of money now to try to fix the problem?

Government Orders

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague. I do not understand how government members can stand time and time again, applaud after their failures and say that they are actually trying to save Canadians from themselves.

I do want to mention that I knocked on thousands of doors in Newmarket—Aurora and heard the concerns of my constituents, which are around violent crime. If I were to go back to the mother who lost her child and say that we are finally back in session, for the 22nd day this entire year, and we are debating whether the government can search through her mail and whether it can control her cash, she would say, “Please listen to the people and their priorities. I am terrified in my own home. Clean up our streets.” Those are the priorities that Canadians have communicated.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, adaptation is a concern of ours, and that is why, in the legislation, we must adapt. We are finding that more and more criminals are using our mail to mail pieces that put together firearms, and also to mail fentanyl, which is mailed in such small quantities. This was a loophole that was being used by many criminals.

Would the member not agree that we need to adapt and catch these criminals?

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, I spent 15 years in the financial sector, and I can say with full confidence that criminals will move way faster than the government can ever move, and what will be left over is ordinary, law-abiding Canadians with their civil liberties violated and a government that can go into anyone's mail without a warrant, just a will, and violate people's privacy. I do not support that.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government was just talking about adapting for criminality. Should, perhaps, the government adapt to keeping prisoners in jail instead of releasing violent offenders immediately on bail?

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, I would have the same question for the Liberal government, which has failed to deliver real bail reform. I am glad that Conservatives have talked tough on crime. We have a member who is working on bail reform. I am very much looking forward to that, and I have been sharing that with people in my riding. I can tell members that they want a serious government to tackle violent crime.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, securing our borders is not a luxury. It is a matter of urgency. For a long time now, the Bloc Québécois has been calling for strong measures to combat the export of stolen vehicles, the increase in asylum claims, the fentanyl crisis and money laundering. However, the situation had to become critical before the government would think about taking any action. After nearly 10 years of complacency, now the government is acting like a pyromaniac firefighter. It did nothing to prevent the fires, and now it wants to rush in and pretend to be the saviour putting out the flames. Yes, some measures have been taken, such as closing Roxham Road, albeit too late, and some announcements have been made about tackling organized crime. However, let us be honest. It was never enough, and never sustainable. It was too often improvised, and more importantly, it was dictated by Washington.

The goal was clearly stated in the Speech from the Throne, specifically, to rebuild public trust in the immigration system and in border security. However, Bill C-2 falls very short of that. This bill seems to be designed less to reassure Quebeckers and Canadians and more to respond to pressure from the United States, in the midst of a tariff war where Donald Trump is using migration and fentanyl as a pretext for taking trade measures.

Members will recall the fiasco of Roxham Road. For years, Ottawa tolerated an irregular crossing that overwhelmed our services. Instead of fixing the problem quickly, it allowed the situation to escalate. The result is that Quebec paid the price but did not receive sufficient compensation. This is why we doubt the government's ability to keep its new promises. Yes, Bill C-2 includes some useful measures, but it is important to bear in mind that, without additional staff on the ground, the border will remain porous.

Take customs, for example. Bill C-2 will finally allow officers at the Canada Border Services Agency to demand facilities for inspecting goods intended for export. For too long, they have been telling us that they cannot open containers at the port of Montreal because they do not have the warrants and facilities to do so. This will be fixed, and it is a step forward.

What are people on the ground saying? The Customs and Immigration Union estimates that it would need another 2,000 to 3,000 officers to get the current job done. The government promised 1,000 new RCMP officers and 1,000 new CBSA officers. The Speech from the Throne did mention RCMP officers, but it did not mention CBSA officers at all. That is why the Bloc Québécois keeps raising this issue. Those officers have to actually be deployed. Without boots on the ground, the new measures will be meaningless.

It is the same issue with Canada Post. Bill C-2 removes some of the legal barriers to mail inspection. However, in my riding of Rimouski—La Matapédia, for example, we already have problems with postal services. In some municipalities, mail is only delivered every other day. A recent staffing shortage even resulted in no mail delivery for several days. If workers are already stretched thin, how can they be expected to do more? These are the government's true colours: it offers promises but no resources, laws but no officers, and heavier workloads but no support.

Another important aspect of Bill C-2 has to do with immigration and asylum claims. Vigilance is essential. Bill C-2 gives the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship the power to override his own officials' decisions before a case is referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. In other words, the minister becomes both judge and jury. That gives one person too much power with not enough safeguards. Let us be clear. If the government wants to rebuild public trust, it needs to demonstrate transparency, predictability and respect for Quebec's jurisdictions. Once again, we have a government that is centralizing decision-making in Ottawa and giving the minister discretionary powers without any real checks and balances. That does not build trust; it destroys it. The Bloc Québécois will be clear: Quebec must continue to have its say on the number of refugees it can comfortably accommodate. We are already taking on more than our share compared to the other provinces. Ottawa should compensate Quebec instead of leaving it to bear this burden alone.

Certain provisions also raise legal questions. For example, the bill prevents the minister and the minister's staff from being compelled to appear before the Refugee Protection Division. Is that consistent with transparency and accountability? The committee will have to answer that question.

• (1710)

The bill also provides that affected individuals may apply for a pre-removal risk assessment. However, I should point out that several countries, such as Haiti, are subject to a moratorium. In those cases, the actual scope of this mechanism is limited. Even the government recognizes that the bill raises legal issues. The proof is that it put out a charter statement in an attempt to justify them. We are going to demand that every clause be examined through that lens.

Again, it is important to recognize that this bill is a step in the right direction. Clause 77 would allow for the cancellation of fraudulent student visas obtained on the basis of fake admission letters. In the wake of the recent scandals, urgent action was needed to protect honest students and the integrity of our universities. The new grounds for inadmissibility will prevent a phantom student who is not attending classes from filing an asylum claim after one year. This practice is abusive and it must stop.

Finally, the end of the 14-day exception in the safe third country agreement closes a loophole that encouraged irregular crossings and fuelled human smuggling networks. The government is finally taking action, but it is doing so unilaterally, without renegotiating the agreement. As a result, those intercepted after 14 days will be returned to their country of origin, unless it is a moratorium country. Evidently, the problem has not been completely resolved. On that point, it almost seems as if the government has taken inspiration from our own agenda. However, I will give it the benefit of the doubt.

The Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of passing Bill C-2 at second reading. To be clear, this is not a carte blanche endorsement. In committee, we will demand a clear hiring plan for the CBSA and the RCMP, call for CBSA officers to be able to patrol between border crossings to provide operational depth without replacing the RCMP, set limits on the minister's new powers to prevent Ottawa from encroaching on Quebec's jurisdiction, create humanitarian ex-

ceptions, including through the pre-removal risk assessment mechanism, and demand fair compensation for Quebec, which is already taking in a disproportionate share of asylum seekers.

The government says it wants to rebuild public trust in the immigration system. However, the government cannot rebuild trust by taking ad hoc measures intended to appease Washington and defuse the threat of tariffs. The government cannot rebuild trust by repeating past fiascoes, such as Roxham Road. It can only rebuild trust by making its system solid, predictable, fair and respectful toward Quebec. Bill C-2 is a step in the right direction. That said, without sufficient staff, without guardrails and without respect for Quebec, the legislation will be incomplete. The Bloc Québécois will do its job, which is to curb excesses, demand results and defend Quebecers' interests. In short, our guiding principle is to protect the border without trampling on rights and to respect Quebec's choices.

• (1715)

[English]

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated the member's speech. It looks like the Bloc Québécois, or at least this member, is very supportive of Bill C-2 and this legislation. I think that is a good move. I understand that they are talking about delays in the process.

Are there any other examples the member would like to give as to how this would help combat crime in his community?

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question, but I did say a lot in my speech.

In April, in the middle of the election campaign, the Prime Minister himself promised to hire 1,000 additional CBSA officers. Can my colleague tell us how many new officers have been hired to date, since her counterparts in the government are unable to tell us? It is rather confusing.

The same goes for the RCMP. There was talk of 1,000 new officers. How many officers have been hired so far? No one on the government side is able to answer that question.

If there is a plan and hiring is planned, I would like someone to tell us how many officers will be hired. This will reassure the opposition parties and, above all, the public.

[English]

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

My colleague from the Liberals, the hon. secretary of state, asked about lowering crime in my hon. colleague's riding. I am just wondering whether my colleague shares the sentiment that the Liberals often state, which is that the Liberals have done enough to fight crime. Certainly, on this side of the House, we do not believe that. Does he share the Liberals' belief?

Government Orders

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Conservative Party's guiding principle is law and order. However, law and order also happens at our borders.

It was the Conservative government, under Harper, that planned cuts to the Canada Border Services Agency. Now that the Conservatives are in opposition, they are telling us they want more staff. There should not be such a contradiction between what they are saying today and what they did in the past.

Quebec is inspiring in many ways. We have a different model of social reintegration than many other places in Canada. I think my colleague should also look into this and analyze this very specific situation regarding the kind of society that Quebec chose to create in the past and that is still an inspiration today.

● (1720)

[English]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague actually read the public accounts before making a statement that the Conservatives cut, because if he had, he would have seen the high point for several years was during the Harper years. In the first three years, the Liberals cut spending, labour and FTEs for the CBSA, which the member's party supported.

Would he like to clarify his statements?

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I like facts, and there is one fact that I will certainly be able to remind my colleague about. As we know, Quebec's motto is "Je me souviens", or "I remember".

The Harper Conservative government planned to cut CBSA staff at the border. That is mentioned in the 2015 report on plans and priorities.

I invite my colleague to check that report and simply send me a brief email saying whether it is false that the report called for cuts to CBSA staff at the border.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. I appreciated his speech, which was well thought out.

Earlier, we were talking about the fact that we would like to take these discussions into committee so that we can move the bill forward and ensure that we are doing what Canadians have asked us to do.

I think my colleague agrees with us. Could he talk a bit about that?

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, we said that we were not going to give the government carte blanche. Once again, we are going to work hard in committee. We want to get some answers from the government.

I repeat that, when promises are made during an election campaign, both the opposition parties and the public want to see results. However, right now, they seem to be mostly empty promises.

On the ground, we are being told that 2,000 to 3,000 more CBSA officers are needed. The government says it will hire 1,000. I do not know where the government got that number, but it is not 1,000 officers that are needed; it is between 2,000 and 3,000.

[English]

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are back today, again, to do something we do a lot of in this place, which is cleaning up yet another mess that the Liberal government, the government for the last 10 years, has created.

This time we are tackling a broken border security regime that lets guns, drugs and criminals flow across the border with absolutely no consequences. When we tie that together with an equally broken criminal justice system that provides no accountability for the offenders and no safety for innocent Canadians, we get a disaster and crisis-level mess. How did we get here? That is pretty simple. We will walk everyone right through it. For everybody watching, for those who might listen this time around, we will start with Justin Trudeau and his ministers. By the way, they are still there on the front bench. They prefer giving rights to criminals over law-abiding Canadians. Pieces of legislation such as Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 codify this ideology and let convicted criminals roam free through a revolving-door justice system of bail with no punishments and no accountability whatsoever.

We see it every single day with every story on the news, story one, two, three, four, five, particularly in my region of the GTA. Piled on that are weak immigration policies that deliver outcomes such as a 632% increase in people trying to cross into the country illegally from the U.S. Sprinkled on that is a healthy dose of free drugs, courtesy of the taxpayer, available to anyone, anywhere, even when we know these drugs end up in the streets or in our schools and, frankly, make the plight of addiction much worse and not better. This is all topped off with a broken federal bureaucracy that has ballooned; it is so weak and so detached from reality that literal terrorist organizations, in some cases, can fundraise, recruit and operate with impunity here in Canada from coast to coast to coast. Some of them have charitable numbers even still.

It does not take a genius to realize that all of these ingredients would set us up for a ginormous, if that is a word, border security and crime crisis in the country.

We get stories like those of Raj Kumar Mehmi, who was convicted of smuggling 80 kilos of cocaine in 2023, sentenced to 15 years and released. He escaped, hopped on a plane and is now gone forever.

Arjun Sahnan, a 19-year-old, was arrested for drive-by shootings and extortion. He got bail, booked a flight and is now gone too. This is the reality of the system that the Liberals designed. They actually designed this. They thought about it and thought these were good changes, which then resulted in chaos.

Apparently, no one on that side saw this coming, not even from a mile away or from their work from home set-ups. We flash forward to right now, a few months later, and what do we see? Once again, we see that the Liberal government is showing up with a bill that does not actually deliver on what Canadians want, what they have asked for and what they are screaming about in the streets. It is a bill that claims to fix a problem but instead proposes things that no Canadian would ever sign off on.

They have cooked up legislation that keeps a broken border and immigration regime in place while also punishing law-abiding citizens with massive expansions in federal power. Bill C-2 keeps in place the catch-and-release for criminals who traffic fentanyl and firearms and takes advantage of the weak laws that hurt Canadians. It does not add mandatory prison time for fentanyl traffickers. It does not add mandatory prison time for gangsters who use guns to commit crimes.

There have been several shootings in my community in Vaughan. In just three weeks, there have been seven. An innocent man literally gave his life to save his family from a random violent home invasion. He was shot to death in his living room, but the legislation would not guarantee that his killers or any other people terrorizing our communities would actually be behind bars. We are told to wait, that it is going to happen.

The same people who created the crisis cannot be trusted to fix it. Even worse, it still allows house arrest for even the most serious offences. A person can commit grand theft auto and still be in their living room playing the video game. At the same time, Bill C-2 puts new limits on the use of cash in our economy, ostensibly to target gangs and criminals.

Do we really believe that gangs and criminals, the ones pushing fentanyl, the ones running guns and laundering money, are suddenly going to start following the law? Of course not. We make those assertions, and we make criminals out of law-abiding citizens.

● (1725)

Instead, seniors and small businesses are the ones who will be unfairly punished by this massive overreach in government power. It even goes farther, with massive new powers of the federal government that threaten Canadian civil liberties.

We know this. We have seen this movie before. It is what the Liberals do every single time. They find a problem, but they do not solve the actual problem; then they massively expand their power to take more rights away from Canadians. We have seen how this happens.

There is no limit to the government's hunger for power. It tried to give itself unlimited spending power during COVID. Just two months ago, it sneakily removed privacy provisions from the online streaming bill and called it an accident. Now, it is burying condi-

tions in the back of the bill that have nothing to do with border security and clearly show Canadians that it wants more power.

Government Orders

This is not just overblown rhetoric. Bill C-2 will let Ottawa open people's mail without oversight, force Internet companies to hand over private information and allow them to search without a warrant in certain scenarios. This is not fixing our borders. It is not protecting Canadians. It is a government power grab, plain and simple, and it should make everybody very uncomfortable.

Canadians did not give the Prime Minister a blank cheque to take more power away from Canadians and infringe on their rights. Instead of that, what we should do in the bill is hire more border agents, the ones who are on the front lines, as was done in the past. They can patrol the entire Canadian border properly, not in an Ottawa office but on the ground. We should have people in uniforms who would enforce the laws that are there.

Let us install scanners at major ports to stop the flow of guns and stolen cars in and out of our country. Maybe we should actually keep track of who is coming in and who is leaving this country so that we do not have another situation where the government actually loses count of everything it has let in.

We should end the soft-on-crime provisions in Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 and put criminals in jail, restoring the rule of law in our country, rather than letting them out on bail minutes, hours or days after they commit a crime. While we are at it, let us stop handing out lethal drugs for free, paid for by the taxpayers, and put people in actual treatment.

The government is coming here to talk a big game about the bill, but once again, the actions do not match the words. The public safety minister should probably have a conversation with the justice minister. He does not seem to think there is a problem with crime at all. He mocked Canadians who are fed up with what is going on in their communities, in their neighbourhoods, in their homes, in their businesses.

He might not think Canada is the Wild West, but when people are being shot in their own homes, when cars are getting carjacked at random, when people are being mugged in the streets, it is a lot closer to the Wild West than we should ever be comfortable with here.

This is a guy who broke the housing market, who broke the long-held consensus on our immigration system. Now he is putting his talents to use at the justice department. I hope we spare all Canadians from that going on for a very long time.

Government Orders

To get to what is at the core of the Liberal government is that they put the same people who broke everything in charge of fixing it. The way they fix it is by bringing forward a bill; they tell us they have good intentions in the bill, yet it is a power grab. It is a power grab to look at our mail, to ban cash, to do things they never had the power to do before, all under the guise of protecting Canadians and protecting our border.

Everybody should take that very seriously. Everybody should look at their intentions with the bill very seriously. They say they are going to do one thing, but they do the exact opposite, and there are no results ever for this.

• (1730)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to take a second to give my deepest condolences and sympathy to Abdul Aleem Farooqi's family. What happened to him and his family is outrageous. It is something that angers me as well, and it is something we are making sure does not happen to anyone else in the future. We are going to do everything possible in our upcoming justice reform legislation to make sure the changes that are recommended by our policing agencies are undertaken.

When it comes to Bill C-2, the bill we are talking about today, our stronger borders act, I would like to know if the member opposite is willing to vote in favour of the legislation, which gives police agencies the tools necessary to crack down on organized crime.

Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question, but police agencies right across the country have been asking the government for bail reform, when the government has destroyed the justice system. The minister was in the last government, which did exactly that. The Liberals have heard from police associations and from mayors across the country, and they did nothing. They say that it is coming tomorrow, but how many more people have to be victimized in their community before tomorrow comes? That is the point that the minister should answer in the House during this debate.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was excellent. She mentioned something about the rising crime in Vaughan—Woodbridge. People are legitimately afraid in their own home in our community, and I was wondering whether my colleague could elaborate on the lack of attention that has been paid since the election, frankly, and long before that, to this very serious issue.

Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, my colleague comes from the community where Mr. Farooqi was from. He stood with Conservatives during a press conference, calling for the very things that the Liberals have broken. This has gone on far too long for far too many families. They do not have to directly be a victim of violent crime. It changes the way that people live. It changes their behaviour. It changes the fact that they have fear of living in their once-safe community. If the Liberals do not understand that and they make fun of Canadians for calling it the wild west, then I do not know what we are doing here.

• (1735)

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know we are veering a little bit into what sounds like a conversa-

tion about bail reform, which is appropriate given the context of the legislation and what the justice minister has been talking about.

I wonder whether the member may have some commentary to add in regard to, in addition to a very significant amount of work ahead of us as a federal government, the role that provincial governments have to play. In many instances, I know that judges who are using their discretion for folks who are being released are provincial appointees. Some changes to the Criminal Code are necessary of course, but there are administration-of-justice components as well. I am wondering whether the member can comment on the role she feels provincial governments have, in addition to that of the federal government.

Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I welcome the member back for his second term. He should know that the federal Criminal Code is administered out of this place, and that is what we are talking about. We are talking about things like Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, which take the onerous provision out and allow weak bail. We are talking about this in light of Bill C-2, because they have allowed chaos in our streets. We will continue talking about crime every single day of the week when the Liberals are trying to convince Canadians that they are the ones trying to fix it.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it almost seems like the Liberals across from us are just wondering why the provincial courts are not restraining people, after the Liberals passed a law that required and imposed the least restraint. It was the secretary of state for public safety who introduced this to the debate, and I would like the member to comment, if she would, on the Liberals' response.

Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, the member well knows, and I am sure it would not be news to the members on the other side, that provincial judges interpret federal laws right out of the Criminal Code. That is how it works.

However, today we are talking about the very fact that the Liberals have let crime, chaos, drugs, disorder, a crisis in our immigration system, a crisis in our housing system and a crisis in the cost of living get out of control. Do they believe that they are the ones to fix it? I am not—

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

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Windsor West.

Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to rise in the House at the start of the parliamentary session on behalf of the great people of Windsor West. More importantly, I am here to speak on their behalf in this chamber.

Before I get to the matter at hand, I would like to speak about the workers of Titan Tool & Die in Windsor, the men and women of Unifor Local 195, who have dedicated, on average, 35-plus years of their lives to this factory, which was built by the late Joseph Szecsei, a proud Canadian and a pioneer of manufacturing in Windsor. Today, these workers are locked out while the employer moves jobs and investment capital to the United States. Why? It is not because of tariffs or trade barriers. It is because of government policies that have made it easier and more profitable for Canadian companies to send work and investment south. This is the reality the Liberals have created: constant talk about supporting Canadian workers, yet policies that incentivize moving jobs and critical investment out of Canada.

The people of Windsor built this company. The Liberals' failure to protect these workers is a failure of leadership. I call on the employer to return to the bargaining table with the union, and I call on the government to finally put Canadian jobs first, before they are lost forever.

With respect to Bill C-2, I am not just going to speak about it as the member of Parliament for Windsor West, but as someone who spent nearly three decades serving as a police officer.

I patrolled our streets and answered the calls. I also served in the marine unit along our international border. I know of many colleagues in Windsor-Essex who serve as police officers and CBSA officers and who intercepted shipments of drugs and weapons before they reached our streets. This is real frontline police work, which results in lives saved and communities protected. Let me share one story that illustrates why we cannot be satisfied with half measures.

A Toronto man was convicted this year for smuggling over 36 million dollars' worth of drugs into Canada. However, over 23 million dollars' worth of his meth was seized at the Windsor-Detroit bridge. Despite the scale of his crime, he was allowed to remain out of jail for nearly six months, until the birth of his child, before finally serving his sentence. This was based on a joint submission by the Crown prosecutor and the defence lawyer and approved by a judge. They all patted themselves on the back for being compassionate citizens, which is very commendable, but where is the compassion for the families who have lost loved ones to these drugs? Where is the compassion for parents burying their children? For communities terrorized by gangs, dealers, and the violence that follows them, where is the compassion? Bill C-2 fails to address these realities. It waters down penalties for serious drug offences and violent crimes while doing little for victims or the families who are left to pick up the shattered pieces of their lives.

When I speak with former colleagues, whether police officers or CBSA officers, the frustration is very clear. They see traffickers and gangbangers treated with leniency. They also see that some prosecutors are rushing to throw the book at ordinary Canadians who are defending a family member from an armed home invader. Does that sound like justice to members? It does not to me.

Some people are asking why some prosecutors, or the police for that matter, are timid when it comes to organized crime and repeat violent offenders, but fearless or even punitive when it comes to law-abiding citizens defending their families. These are the ques-

tions that victims, families and even frontline police officers are asking us every day. Even experts and legal practitioners have raised alarms that the bill before us is light on consequences. My colleague, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, a former prosecutor, has already highlighted a lack of serious penalties. Without meaningful consequences, the message is clear: Crime pays and victims do not matter at all.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police emphasizes the need for balance. Yes, that is needed. It supports prevention and treatment, but they also know, like any other police officer, as well as those of us here, that enforcement matters. Without enforcement and without accountability, we are left responding to overdoses, chasing repeat offenders and watching our social fabric unravel.

● (1740)

Let us be very clear: Windsor West is on the front lines of these challenges. Every illegal gun smuggled across our border, and every fentanyl pill pressed and sold on our streets, puts our families at risk. That is not only in Windsor, but also in the rest of Canada. Instead of giving prosecutors and law enforcement stronger tools, this bill sends the opposite signal, which is that Canada is a soft target and our justice system bends instead of standing firm.

Another aspect of the bill that raises legitimate concern among Canadians is privacy. We value the freedoms and privacy of every Canadian. No one should fear that their personal correspondence or packages can be opened arbitrarily. It is absolutely true that we cannot and must not ignore the threats posed by illegal drugs, firearms and organized crime. Law enforcement must have the tools to investigate serious criminal activity but only in a targeted, high-risk context and always with proper judicial oversight. Strong safeguards, transparency and accountability are essential to ensuring that Canadians' rights are respected.

There is a deeper concern here, which is our sovereignty. Buried in this bill are provisions that could allow the government to enter into agreements with foreign states. I have heard from many constituents about this issue. These agreements may compel Canadian service providers to hand over information about our citizens. Civil liberties experts have warned that this framework risks weakening judicial oversight, especially if it links to treaties such as the Budapest protocol or the U.S.-style data-sharing arrangements. We cannot have this.

Government Orders

When we make it clear that it is easier for foreign authorities to access Canadians' private information without full and transparent judicial scrutiny, we are not just eroding our privacy and that of our citizens. We are also giving up a piece of our sovereignty. Protecting our borders should not mean handing over control of our citizens' data.

The Liberal government has had nearly a decade to act decisively on crime and border security, but what we see instead are half measures and weak enforcement. Families are losing children to overdoses. Communities are living in fear of violent repeat offenders. Frontline officers are frustrated that the laws tie their hands while criminals exploit loopholes.

Conservatives believe in compassion, but compassion without accountability is weakness. If we want safer streets and stronger communities, we need both prevention and firm enforcement. We need all of our prosecutors to take criminals seriously, not just some of them. We need police and CBSA officers to have the resources and our backing so they can use their powers effectively. We need penalties that match the harm these criminals cause. Canadians deserve better. We will continue to stand with victims, families and the frontline officers who put themselves in harm's way every day to defend our communities.

Windsor West is a community of builders, protectors and entrepreneurs. We deserve a government that stands with our workers, supports our frontline officers and protects our families from criminals who prey on them. We Conservatives will fight for safer streets, stronger borders and a truly sovereign nation that answers to its own people.

● (1745)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the member opposite's comments he talked about the importance of privacy of Canadians, which we believe in. I had an opportunity this summer to talk to an RCMP member in my community, and he was explaining to me why this portion of the bill is really important. He talked about the fact that he worked in Yukon, and he took a week away. In one week, one package came in. There had been one case of overdose, and in only one week, he saw 700 cases.

Can the member talk about why RCMP members are calling for us to bring this measure into the bill to make sure we can reduce overdoses in communities like Yukon?

Harb Gill: Madam Speaker, there are many things we need to do to fix our judicial and postal systems, but targeting people and their mail through these measures is not the answer. There has to be better options, better scanners, better things that we can use to intercept, rather than using a blanket opportunity to go after every piece of mail out there to say we are going to treat all our citizens as suspects. That is not how we should treat our people.

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, in my community, I have certainly seen issues with the bail reform that has been put in place by the Liberal government. We have had individuals commit assaults, be out on the street the same day and commit those types of awful crimes again.

I am wondering if the member has seen any of the impacts of the terrible, Liberal criminal legislation in his riding.

Harb Gill: Madam Speaker, that is one of the reasons I got involved and came to this chamber. I am sick and tired of us being constant victims. We need to stand up to these criminal elements. We need to be able to stand up to organized crime, and we need to stand up to defend ourselves.

I would love and appreciate if the Liberal government did something about this, rather than telling our folks, "Sorry, we are trying our best." As a salesman of the justice system in my previous life, I told folks, "This is not a good product," and I hated to say that. That is not who we are. That is not how our country should be defined.

● (1750)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe the conversation is misleading Canadians to some degree. The Canada postal act currently does not allow Canada Post to inspect parcels that are under 500 grams. There were over 2.2 billion letters sent in 2023. Many of these letters were found to contain illicit drugs, fentanyl or weapons.

Does the member not think that the government, Canada Post, inspectors or police should have the authority to be able to seek a warrant if these types of substances are killing Canadians?

Harb Gill: Madam Speaker, without proper judicial authorization, we become a lawless country. We have to have some safeguards in place so that we can do all these things.

Yes, I absolutely believe that we should be able to catch the criminals who are using the Canada Post system to send these drugs willy-nilly. That should not be an option for anybody. How about starting with a better intel system where we can identify the idiots who are sending all these things to poor Canadians who are victims of drug overdoses? Let us start with that.

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking all the constituents of Abbotsford—South Langley. I am honoured to be here representing my community today.

The citizens of my riding have been advocating for stronger laws and stronger borders. I appreciate that Bill C-2 is trying to tackle high crime rates, but the bill in its current form is unacceptable. It has taken 10 years for the Liberals to put it forward, and if it is passed, crime rates will continue to rise in our communities and individual freedoms will be bulldozed by the Liberal government.

My riding encompasses borders with the United States. The Sumas and Aldergrove border crossings fall within my riding. It is close to the Pacific Ocean ports as well.

In British Columbia, fentanyl continues to be devastating in all of our communities. According to Health Canada, close to 50,000 Canadians died from apparent opioid toxicity between January 2016 and June 2024. Of all accidental opioid deaths in the first half of 2024, 79% involved fentanyl. In November 2024, police uncovered a superlab in Langley, within my community, that was capable of producing multiple kilograms of fentanyl every single week.

Despite these alarming facts, the Liberal government refuses to fix Canada's broken jail system. Members of my community believe that those who are profiting from poisoning community members, especially the children within our communities, belong behind bars. If the government were serious about protecting our borders, our neighbours and the neighbourhoods within our communities, it would ensure that moving fentanyl into our communities carried real jail time.

This bill does not address any mandatory minimums. It would maintain house arrest for serious crimes and includes no minimum sentencing for those who commit sexual assault against children. Since 2015, sexual violations against children have gone up 118%. That is simply disgraceful. If families cannot protect their children and we here cannot protect our children, who will?

Bill C-2 demonstrates a larger issue in Canadian policy. The Liberal government will overlook serious crimes, including crimes against children, without any ramifications. If passed in its current state, Bill C-2 will allow criminals to keep taking advantage of Canadians. Crime rates for extortion and sex-related crimes are growing dramatically. We need to bring in real change, and we need it now.

If this so-called strong borders act was serious about protecting our borders, it would increase mandatory minimums for drug traffickers. Currently, the mandatory minimum is only one year. How could our borders be truly strong if those who are trafficking toxic drugs are not being punished properly? Drug traffickers are bringing death sentences to our communities. One year in jail is insulting to the victims of dangerous crimes. However, it is not surprising considering that the Liberal Party is the one that supported the decriminalization of fentanyl in my province.

Why is it that the more the government fails to address real criminality, the more it simultaneously increases the targeting of innocent law-abiding citizens? The reality is that Canada is desperate for tougher policies on crime. Since 2015, violent crime has gone up 50%. Homicides are up by 27%. Sexual assaults are up by 75%, and 90% of those are committed against women. The Liberals should be ashamed, especially as they claim to champion the support of women. Violent firearms offences are up by 116%, and gun regulations do not stop criminals from acquiring firearms. They only hurt law-abiding citizens.

Since 2015, extortion is up 357%, auto theft is up 45% and human trafficking is up 84%. The bottom line is that if the Liberals cared about strengthening our borders, they would jail the traffickers, and there would be an immediate drop in crimes with illegal

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weapons, such as extortion and armed robbery. Bill C-2, if passed in its current form, will allow gangsters and traffickers to continue to cause chaos and tragedy in my riding.

• (1755)

This bill would also give the government warrantless power over Canadians' mail. The Liberals seem perfectly fine with intercepting private letters and packages of law-abiding Canadians. This is not public safety; this is government overreach.

Bill C-2 then targets the use of cash, our legal tender, based on hypothetical crimes, while the Liberals stay soft on the real ones. Extortion, auto theft and human trafficking are the real crimes surging, and the government is more interested in regulating what is in our wallets and in our mail. Drug dealers would not be stopped by this bill. They would simply move their operations to different forms and different systems. Money launderers would not be stopped either. They would find new ways to move their cash. The only people who would get squeezed are honest Canadians who pay their bills and send packages.

Canadians want real change and criminals behind bars, not more government control over their mail and money. Under this legislation, the government reserves the right to force the hand of Canadians and Internet companies to surrender sensitive data without a warrant. Police cannot search our homes without warrants or probable cause, so why should they be allowed to search our private communications without warrants? That is not just an attack on privacy. It goes against free speech and expression, both of which are protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

To conclude my speech, I want to end on the note that I completely agree with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government, who once sat in opposition and said, "Could the minister assure those who are listening to the debate that the government does not, in any fashion whatsoever, allow for any sort of invasion of privacy without some form of a judicial court warrant to enable police to do so?" The Liberals once understood this policy, and today they are shredding it. Canadians want criminals behind bars, not their freedom bargained away. Bill C-2 would bulldoze liberties while letting criminals off the hook, and that is why the Conservatives will not stand for it.

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• (1800)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite mentioned extortion. I know extortion has increased in his community. It is a concern that I have, and I am glad the member shares it.

This piece of legislation, Bill C-2, would allow police to identify a person from their phone number by getting basic subscriber information from a telco company, meaning their name and address. This is a very important tool that law enforcement has been asking for so their investigations are not delayed or they can rule people out.

Does the member not feel that being able to speed up extortion investigations is an important tool that we should give law enforcement?

Sukhman Gill: Madam Speaker, if the Liberals were so concerned about extortion, they would have supported my colleague's extortion bill, which addressed all these concerns, and voted in favour of it instead of opposing it. The Conservatives are here fighting for Canadians and voicing their concerns. I know on a first-hand basis the damage that is being done by Liberal policies.

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals call this bill the strong borders act. Canadians want secure borders, something the Liberals have opened up in the last 10 years through their intentional policies. Why do Canadians want a secure border? It is because the root of the issue comes down to public safety, again something the Liberals have completely shattered in the last 10 years with procrime policies that have unleashed unprecedented levels of crime into our once-safe communities.

If the Liberals care about public safety, why is there nothing in this bill about mandatory prison time for fentanyl traffickers, who are killing people en masse, to the tune of tens of thousands? Why is there nothing in this bill about mandatory prison time for gangsters who are using guns to commit crimes? Lastly, why does this bill contain nothing about permitting house arrest, which the Liberals have enabled through their soft-on-crime, intentional procrime policies over the last 10 years, when they purportedly want to deal with this public safety issue? Is this just another case of Liberal incompetence or are they trying to mislead Canadians?

Sukhman Gill: Madam Speaker, yes, it is exactly what my colleague from Richmond Hill said. It is Liberal incompetence. We see that our communities are now facing challenges like at no other time before. We have seen that incompetence trickle down year after year, and the effects are more crucial now than we have ever seen before.

We need to make sure that we secure our borders properly and bring forward proper bills and amendments that will make sure we strengthen our justice system. My colleague is very right about the matter, because he is facing the same challenges we are in my community of Abbotsford—South Langley.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to refer back to the member's quote on my principles with respect to getting a warrant. The problem the member is facing is that he is listening to the Conservatives in the back room. They are wrong. In fact, if we look at the legislation, all

we need to realize is that Canada Post has a legal obligation to deliver the mail. With respect to delivery, it cannot open letters. If the legislation were to pass and a law enforcement agency were to get a warrant, it would be able to open a letter.

Fentanyl is being mailed today to all sorts of communities. That is why we need this bill. My principal position on this has not changed from years ago. Would the member not agree in principle that getting a warrant to open a letter is a good aspect of the legislation? If the answer to that is that he agrees, then maybe the Conservatives need to revisit their speaking notes.

• (1805)

Sukhman Gill: Madam Speaker, we need to make sure we address the concerns our citizens are facing. B.C. is facing a fentanyl crisis like no other. The member across the aisle is correct. He needs to make sure he is competent in what he is stating, as before. At one point, the member across was right, but now he is not aligned with what he said years before.

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, Bill C-2 is being promoted as a crime and border security bill, but it includes sweeping measures that touch on Canadians' private lives. In a data-driven world, it is of utmost importance that governments, citizens and companies have the fundamental right to privacy protected.

The issue with Bill C-2 is that it touches on so many details without enough language or safeguards in place to properly study each component in a way that serves the best interests of Canadians or the implications of the new language contained in this omnibus piece of legislation.

While there are many parts of the bill that could be critiqued, I will focus on the privacy side. This is particularly important to me because in the last Parliament, I had the privilege of working on the industry committee on Bill C-27, which attempted to update Canada's privacy laws. In that process, we sought to enshrine a fundamental right to privacy in legislation. We sought to establish world-leading protections and safeguards for children. We sought to define and limit the socially and commercially acceptable use of personal data. We sought to strike a fine balance between commercial interests and the right of personal data to be protected under the ownership of its user.

I cannot help but think of the relationship to Bill C-2 and the sweeping powers it seeks to provide government that we sought to protect in the last Parliament.

In my opinion, the Liberals have taken this opportunity to develop a secretive, sweeping surveillance regime into a bill that was supposed to be about border and crime issues in response to the tariff challenges we face from the United States.

With that context in mind, let me turn to the specific parts of Bill C-2 that warrant, in my opinion, further study on privacy concerns and are of greatest concern to my constituents and experts alike who have written my office.

Let us look at part 14, an amendment to the Criminal Code. Part 14 would create a new law that would let police make “information demands”. This means police officers could ask Internet or phone companies whether someone is a subscriber, even without a warrant. The standard for doing this in the legislation is very low: police would only need to have a “reasonable suspicion”. The Supreme Court has already said that is not enough when it comes to people's online account information.

That may go against two very important recent Supreme Court decisions. In *R v. Spencer*, the Supreme Court ruled that Canadians have a right to privacy in their Internet account details and police need a warrant to access that information. In *R v. Bykovets*, in 2024, the court made it clear that even things like IP addresses are private and also need a warrant to access. Part 14 would let police bypass these privacy protections.

Part 15 of the act, the supporting authorized access to information act, would create a new category of electronic service providers and designate certain core providers. These companies would be forced to build and maintain technical back doors at the request of law enforcement, allow law enforcement to test direct access to their systems and keep all such requests secret from the public. Members should think about the implications of that. The government could tell a telco, an Internet company, that it is going to do things in private with people's personal data, and it does not have to inform the public. This has massive implications that need to be examined carefully.

Part 16 of the act would rewrite Canada's privacy and financial rules. It touches upon the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, under its sections 11.7(1) to 11.7(3). It would create a new part 1.2 of this law, allowing reporting entities, such as banks, credit unions and money services businesses, to collect and use personal information without an individual's knowledge or consent if the data is provided by the government or law enforcement for purposes related to anti-money laundering, terrorist financing or sanctions evasion.

● (1810)

I will note in this request that we do need to improve this bill. Without some of the safeguards that Conservatives and even Liberal members were trying to establish for Bill C-27, it would open the door to future abuse and misuse by law enforcement agencies if these definitions and concepts of privacy and data are not modernized in Canada.

I note the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act's proposed sections 7 and 9. Under this portion of part 16, the bill introduces exceptions so that the usual requirement for knowledge or consent no longer applies when collection or use falls

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under the above provisions, namely the terrorism financing act. It would also remove the obligation for individuals to access their own information if it was obtained under these rules. Essentially, this would allow for banks and financial institutions to use Canadians' financial information without consent when the government supplies it.

I think again about the implications this would have with the Canada Revenue Agency, financial institutions and the privacy of individuals and what this could do to the makeup of families' information that they want to keep private from other family members, not for criminal purposes, but maybe for business-related purposes. We have privacy in Canada for a reason. This bill would undermine it.

Part 11 is about cash transaction restrictions. Constituents in my community have raised concerns about the provisions related to cash transactions. I know in many cases, in British Columbia especially, at casinos and at car dealerships, cash transactions have been abused, but there may be a better way to treat cash moving forward than what is outlined in this bill. We have to think about the context of religious organizations that collect large amounts of cash at a weekly service, such as at a gurdwara or at a Christian church. We have to look at charities and auctions and the application the bill would have on those aspects of our society.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not quickly touch upon the Canada Post Corporation Act amendments. The Liberals think giving the government the ability to open our mail on very spurious grounds would serve Canada's interests. I would argue that we can find a middle ground. We can apply technology. We could speed up the use of warrants when necessary so that law enforcement would indeed have access to drugs, such as fentanyl, that are mailed in the Canada Post system.

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In closing, this bill is litigation in action. I just cannot imagine the number of court cases that are going to come from this legislation if we do not address these major privacy concerns, if we do not get the definitions correct and if the government is not very clear about the safeguards and the application of the things that they are proposing, which would go well beyond everything they promised in the election in a way that Canadians are not even aware of. This legislation needs careful scrutiny, so if this bill passes, I would encourage the minister to critically review whether the privacy and data collection aspect is even necessary for its core objectives of protecting our border.

Coming from a border town, I know we want strong infrastructure at our border. We want to see more CBSA officers enforcing existing laws. We want to see the equipment and the military presence where necessary to keep Canadians safe, but this legislation goes well above and beyond the Canadian consensus about what we need to do to keep people safe today.

• (1815)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, something that I was pretty devastated to learn earlier as I was getting briefed on the crime issue is that child sexual exploitation, sextortion, is one of the highest reported crimes in Canada today, and it is happening with Canadian offenders. It is happening across lines as well across the world, and it is so important that we tackle this.

One of the challenges that police are facing is that they have to be so far into an investigation, with reasonable grounds to believe that a suspect has committed a crime, rather than the threshold that would be changed in this legislation, which would be reasonable grounds to suspect and would allow officers to get basic information of who an IP address or a telephone number belongs to.

As such, I believe that it is very misleading when the member says that this would give police access to all of the suspect's data. That is not true. It is basic information, so I would like it if the member would correct the facts.

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I do not believe I need to correct any facts about the consequences of how the bill is written and the implications I sought to draw attention to.

In our caucus, we have a former Crown prosecutor, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, who spent his career combatting sexual exploitation. There are many other things we could do in the justice system, which the Liberals have had 10 years to address, related to evidence and discovery that many lawyers and Crown counsel across Canada have been asking for. I would encourage the Liberal justice minister and other members of the Liberal caucus to look at existing things they could do right now, according to the Jordan's principle as well, to speed up access to justice in this country, especially as it relates to the protection of minors.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to say hello to the people of Rimouski—La Matapédia, whom I am proud and honoured to represent. The riding name has changed, but I am not forgetting the people of

La Mitis, Les Basques and Neigette, and I want to say hello to them too.

My question for my Conservative colleague is quite simple. The bill gives extraordinary powers to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. We want to ensure that the choices made by Quebec, which shares jurisdiction over immigration, are respected.

Does my Conservative colleague agree with the idea of the federal minister being able to cancel visas en masse, including visas for people selected by Quebec? I would like a yes or no answer.

[English]

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, in many cases, Quebec makes a strong case about protecting its jurisdictions under the Constitution. In fact, sometimes I believe British Columbia could learn a bit from Quebec and assert its provincial authority as well.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague has, as all Conservatives have, spent time engaging with police chiefs and police officers in his riding and across his province. Has any police chief said that the pressing crime issue they need to deal with is people using cash?

The bill goes far beyond what the Liberal government says it will. It would prohibit otherwise law-abiding citizens from buying a used vehicle in cash. Have any members of law enforcement said they want this right?

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I recently met with the chief of police of Abbotsford, and he mentioned nothing about cash transactions. In fact, in my conversations with the police forces in the Fraser Valley and in the greater Vancouver region, they were mostly concerned about bail. They want to see bail reform right now. That is what they want to see.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member whether he asked that question in particular. I spoke all summer to law enforcement and they do like the provisions, in particular when it comes to using cash to buy luxury items like cars and luxury bags. It is money laundering, and it has been a big problem in Canada. I know the Conservatives called for action on that.

Why will the hon. member not support it? I would like the member to please let me know if he asked the police that question.

• (1820)

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, as it relates to money laundering, I have been up in the House talking about the Peter German report and about the implications it has had for British Columbia probably more than any other member. What I find so ironic today is that the Liberals, for the very first time in my six years in this chamber, are actually speaking about protecting Canadians for a change. Under their watch, we have seen a rise in crime and violence against women and—

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

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will start out with a very simple principle that I think all of us would agree with. Certainly, science would agree with it: The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Extending grace to those on the other side, I think we all want to get to a point where we have safe, secure borders, borders where we do not have fentanyl flowing, where we do not have the flowing of illegal guns and where we do not have illegal products crossing our borders. I think we would all agree on that.

My question is, why has the government decided to obstruct its own legislation by putting through a number of things that are spurious and really do not have anything to do with the core mission I talked about? We all want to get to the same point. We want to get to a destination where Canada has safe, secure borders.

We know that the men and women at the CBSA work hard every day. However, we also know that, over the last 10 years in this chamber, the Liberals have not given them the tools they need for maximum success. Instead of talking about various issues, why do we not have a laser-focused piece of legislation that focuses on some of the core mandate issues, things we can all agree upon, and pass the legislation? I will talk about why these things are concerns to us.

I will give an example of how we could do this. Bill C-5 is deeply flawed. It is meant to be a band-aid solution for the past 10 years of terrible legislation, such as the cap on oil and gas and Bill C-69. I could go on. It is a sort of get-out-of-jail-free card for certain projects. We saw that at least it would get some projects done. My team and I worked personally and closely with the minister's team to work with that legislation to make it better. Conservatives passed over 20 different constructive amendments to improve that legislation and ended up voting for it. I do not understand why the Liberals did not adopt the same model for Bill C-2. Instead they decided to digress on a number of strange paths.

I will talk first of all about the ability for the government to obtain documents and important, critical information, such as medical information, from ISP providers, from banks and from other institutions without a warrant. That is dangerous. That is not the type of power the government needs. I agree that the member made an excellent point. As a parent of a 10-year-old and an 11-year-old, I want to make sure, to the fullest extent possible, that my children and all Canadian children are protected from the predators who are out there. I am open to discussions on that, but why not have a narrow piece of legislation that is focused on that? Why not use age verification, as in Bill S-209, which would protect children from some of these predators who are online?

The scope of data that would be available to the government is incredible. I do not think the member for Winnipeg North would have gone on a dating app recently, so this is probably not a concern to him. However, millions of Canadians have. I think they would be shocked to know that a border security bill would give the government the ability to access their Tinder profile.

What a digression that was. Once again, I will get back to my original point. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Why would we not have legislation to put that in place?

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Then there are restrictions on cash. As I said, there are definitely areas where cash is misused in our economy. It can be used for crimes, such as extortion, blackmail and drug dealing. If someone can name it, it is used for that on the black market. As legislators, we have to be cognizant of this. We want to protect Canadians from being victims of crime.

● (1825)

Canada is known as a haven for money launderers. There is actually a term for it: snow washing. We need to fight money laundering. My colleague, the member for Simcoe North, put forward a great private member's bill that sought to fight money laundering. However, the government refused to support it and eventually it died on the Order Paper, which is unfortunate.

This is always about a conflict of rights. There are very few cases where one person is right and one person is wrong, so when we are dealing with different rights, we need to act like a surgeon. We cannot just go in with a cannon and blow things up. Why not be surgical about our approach? Instead of putting in these massive restrictions, these dragnets around past transactions, let us be surgical. Let us look at the details. Let us make sure that we are not, for example, as a member stated earlier, accidentally bringing in gurdwaras, temples, mosques, churches and synagogues, where often cash is part of transactions. There are many cultural and social activities that still rely on cash, and to have cash included is not the right idea.

At the end of the day, we can see the ideological divide. Conservatives fundamentally believe in the Canadian public. We believe in Canadians. We want to give them every opportunity to do the right thing. It is not to say that there cannot be some restrictions and there should not be restrictions, but on that side of the aisle, the new government and the old government are the same on this principle. The Liberals believe that more government is better government, that the more intrusion in our lives, the better. They believe that government can do no wrong.

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We have seen, over the last decade, that the government can do lots of things wrong. We saw it invoke the Emergencies Act and de-bank Canadians, and it used such broad powers. I have put on the record before that the use of those provisions was fairly narrow, and very few people were debanked. I want to make that clear because that is the truth and I am here to speak the truth. However, the problem was that the proclamation the Liberals used, the emergency measures proclamation, was broad. These are not my words, but one of the expert witnesses we had before the finance committee said they were so broad that the government could have debanked someone who simply sold a pack of gum to someone who participated in the protest movement. That is not from me. Members can check the finance committee records from a couple of years back.

I am not saying that all government is bad and that government workers are bad. I am saying the opposite, as 99% are great people who do great work 99% of the time. The challenge is that we need oversight over everyone, because humans are innately flawed and will not always do the right thing. That is why we have judicial oversight. It is why we should have carefully crafted legislation that uses a laser target to get at the people we want to get at.

Instead of making a straight line, the government has decided to wander all over various places, from restricting cash transactions to getting warrantless access to the records held by ISPs and banks. This is opening up Canadians to abuse at the hands of perhaps an incompetent or worse government official. We want to make sure there is oversight of the government, such as with a search that requires a warrant.

In conclusion, while the Conservatives will always be the party of law and order and we will always stand for a strong border, we are very confused by this legislation.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

● (1830)

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate having the opportunity this evening to speak about the metastasizing unemployment crisis that is facing this country. We have seen over the course of the summer that new reports demonstrate a continuously worsening situation, although I think it is important to say as well that this is the continuation of a three-year trend. It is not as if things were rosy and then all of a sudden unemployment got bad; this is the continuation of a running trend of worsening employment numbers. The unemployment rate overall is at 7.1%.

Things are getting worse for people of all ages. I want to be clear that it is not only young people who are facing this challenge, but it is particularly acute for them. The employment rate for young people in Canada is now at a more-than-25-year low. We have to go back to before the year 2000, which I think is three Liberal prime ministers ago, to find a situation where the youth employment rate

was lower than it is now outside of the acute phase of the COVID pandemic. We are clearly in a situation where, for young people, we are already at recession levels of employment. This is a concern for many reasons. It is a concern because of the pain that young people are experiencing. The combination of housing being so difficult to access, out of reach for most, and a situation where employment is increasingly out of reach is leading to a lot of frustration and even despondency in the next generation.

Adding to that, youth unemployment, I think, is an indicator of broader problems in the economy. When companies are pessimistic about the future, their first step is not to let go of senior staff but to not give as many opportunities to those who are just entering the workforce. I think that is a reality, so the youth unemployment rate is a concern in its own right and also for what it indicates about the health of the economy.

We see also how the cost of living crisis is contributing to the unemployment situation. The latest report from Statistics Canada outlines how more people are working multiple jobs because they need the extra money to get by. More people are asking for additional hours from their employer, again because they need the income to pay for basic expenses. The fact that people are struggling because of the cost of living crisis is contributing to more pressure on the labour market, so we have these interconnected, compounding problems. This really is the outworking of a number of different policy failures.

For 10 years we have had a Liberal government that has not been able to support the moving forward of major infrastructure projects that our economy needs. It has put in place Bill C-48, Bill C-69, a production cap and an industrial carbon tax; these policies are blocking development that would help young people get to work. We have seen increasing red tape and other barriers put in front of small businesses that make it harder for them to do business in Canada and to create jobs for young people. We have seen immigration failures, and that is why Conservatives have proposed essential reforms, so that young people can get back to work. We see policy failures contributing to the cost of living crisis, as well as poor alignment with respect to training policy. Many different policy failures have led to the situation.

We need to see a plan from the government, a plan that involves reversing some of these failures. Where is the plan?

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan knows that for the country to succeed, it is crucial that young people secure a solid footing in the job market. I appreciate his ongoing interest in youth employment.

We need young people to keep Canada's economy strong and vibrant. The Canada summer jobs program, or CSJ, is one way we are preparing them for this generational opportunity. The CSJ has a proven track record of providing many young Canadians with their first job. I will bet it is how more than a few of us in this place got our first summer jobs.

Since 2019, more than 533,000 young people have gotten summer jobs because of the program. Each one of those jobs allowed a young person to gain valuable work experience, learn new skills and explore career interests, all while earning money to help pay for education and living expenses.

At a time when many young people are feeling anxious about their future job prospects, the Government of Canada announced that up to 6,000 more Canada summer jobs opportunities were available for youth this summer, on top of the 70,000 jobs already announced for the summer of 2025.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to fixing Canada's labour shortages, but Canada summer jobs is continuing to set young people up for a lifetime of success in the job market and continuing to help thousands of small businesses that have staffing needs. Our current labour shortages pose a collective challenge for federal and provincial governments, unions and businesses. To keep Canada on course as the G7 leader, we must collaborate to ensure our workers have access to training, retraining and upskilling.

Let me tell members about a few programs that do just that. This year alone, the Government of Canada aims to support over 138,000 opportunities for youth and students under the youth employment and skills strategy program, Canada summer jobs, the Canada service corps and the student work placement program.

It is an unusual labour market. By 2031, 600,000 skilled trade workers will retire, and 400,000 new jobs will be created by the end of this decade. To build a pipeline of workers in the skilled trades for today and tomorrow, we also invest nearly \$1 billion annually in skilled trades apprenticeship supports through loans, tax credits and employment insurance benefits during in-school training.

The skills for success program has provided training opportunities to over 10,300 young adults aged 18 to 34. This enhances their foundational and transferable skills, such as literacy, digital and social-emotional skills, to help them become more resilient and successful and get and keep good jobs in today's economy. We are also making sure individuals facing additional barriers have access to the supports needed to access education and training.

Each of these programs helps us show the world that Canada has a very deep pool of talent.

I thank the member opposite for his question. The Government of Canada will be there with opportunities for Canadians of all ages to grow the workforce of tomorrow. We will keep on working hard to strengthen Canada's economy.

• (1835)

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary presented government subsidy through the Canada summer jobs program as the solution to this youth unemployment crisis, but let us talk about some numbers.

Canada has over two million post-secondary students. The jobs numbers from Statistics Canada show that about one in five returning students was unemployed this summer, so we are talking about probably more than 400,000 students. The government's response is to say that it proposes to subsidize 6,000 new positions. Many of those positions are actually for eight weeks, so we are talking about

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a problem, for returning students alone, of over 400,000 positions, and its response is a public subsidy for 6,000 positions.

I think these numbers underline that we cannot subsidize our way out of a bad economy. The government needs to fix the underlying problems.

Annie Koutrakis: Madam Speaker, I want to assure the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan that we have an array of great programs supporting our boundless ambition to create a skilled workforce for the future. Youth are the drivers of future economic growth. By supporting 6,000 additional summer jobs for youth, we are equipping them with the skills and experience needed to thrive.

From April 21 to July 21, young job seekers between the ages of 15 and 30 could find summer job opportunities in their communities on the job bank website and mobile app. This important investment in Canada summer jobs means that more youth will benefit. When youth have the skills and experience they need to join the workforce, our communities and economy benefit. It is more than just an eight-week program. It allows them to have hands-on experience for today, tomorrow and the future.

• (1840)

JUSTICE

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, before Parliament rose for the summer, I shared the heart-breaking story of the Lehmann family from my riding in Mission. They lost \$300,000 to extortion. Their lives were completely destabilized, yet the criminal never spent a single day in jail, only nine months of house arrest and probation, while the Lehmanns lost their retirement income.

Since I raised that question, more devastating stories have come to light. Just today, another suspect was arrested in a Brampton extortion and shooting case. Earlier this summer, gunshots were fired at homes in Brampton neighbourhoods, targeting residents in what authorities say was part of a broader extortion scheme.

In Surrey, extortion has reached alarming levels. As of mid-September, the Surrey Police Service is actively investigating 44 extortion cases, 27 including shootings, targeted at residents and businesses. It has gotten so bad that Mayor Brenda Locke has gone as far as announcing a \$250,000 reward fund for information leading to convictions. I believe it is the largest in Canadian history. Violent crime is up 55%. Firearms-related crimes have increased 130%. Extortion, one of the most destabilizing crimes a community can face, has spiked 333%.

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Canadians deserve better, and Conservatives have a plan that will restore and strengthen mandatory jail time for extortionists to face real consequences. My colleague from Ontario is introducing the jail not bail act to take stronger action against violent, repeat offenders. The act would end catch-and-release policies that too often put dangerous individuals back on the streets. It would create a major offences category that includes crimes such as firearms offences, sexual assault, kidnapping, human trafficking, home invasion, robbery, extortion, arson and assault.

Families are being devastated, businesses are being terrorized and communities are being destabilized. I will ask again, will the Liberals stand with Canada, the Canadian consensus, and admit that their soft-on-crime policies under Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 have destabilized our communities? Can they admit their faults and work with Conservatives to reverse that legislation and restore hope, justice and equality, especially for women, who are most impacted by their soft-on-crime policies? Will they stand with Canadians and make the changes we need to see?

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is deeply concerned by the growing number of Canadians who fall victim to extortion each year. As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, so too have the tactics used by most who commit extortion. These extortionists are increasingly sophisticated and difficult to detect. They threaten safety in our communities and, most disturbingly, often target the most vulnerable members of our society. Victims of extortion range from youth and families to small business owners.

One of the most disturbing forms of extortion is sextortion. In these cases, someone threatens to distribute sexually explicit images or videos, often involving minors, unless the victim complies with demands of money, additional content or other actions. Extortion also poses a serious threat to Canadian business owners who receive threats by phone or text demanding payment. Many of these incidents bear the hallmarks of organized crime: coordination, targeted messaging and the use of firearms.

The Criminal Code already provides significant penalties to address these situations. First, the offence of extortion is punishable by imprisonment. In cases involving restricted or prohibited firearms or when extortion is committed by any firearm and in connection with a criminal organization, mandatory minimum penalties of five years for a first offence apply, or even seven years for subsequent offences is provided. In addition, the Criminal Code contains a comprehensive set of offences to particularly protect children and youth from such crimes, including offences related to child pornography and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.

Canada's laws also clearly target organized crime, including through specific offences in the Criminal Code under sections 467.11 to 467.13, which address participation in crimes committed for the benefit of such organizations. For instance, someone who scouts businesses as potential targets for extortion or a person making threatening calls on behalf of such a group may be charged with participating in the activities of, or committing an offence for the benefit of, a criminal organization. These charges are in addition to the underlining offence of extortion.

When both extortion and organized crime charges are laid, the law requires that sentences be served consecutively and not concurrently, further strengthening the penalties imposed. Conditional sentences are not permitted for organized crime-related extortion or for offences punishable by mandatory minimum penalties.

This said, the government recognizes that more can be done to further address serious crime including extortion. This is why the government has committed to tougher sentencing for violent and organized crime through measures that focus on denunciation and deterrence and protecting children from sextortion by giving law enforcement agencies and prosecutors the tools they need to bring offenders to justice.

The government also recognizes that no one level of government can address this issue alone, and that co-operation with provincial and territorial partners and law enforcement agencies is vital and essential. By working together, we can better support victims, disrupt organized networks and keep Canadians safe.

● (1845)

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, in good faith to the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, I have a couple of follow-up questions.

How many Canadians were convicted of extortion in the last year? When will the government bring forward legislation on tougher sentences? Finally, the member referenced new tools to address these challenges. When will we see those new tools?

I am pleased to see the member outline the gravity of the problem, but what Canadians want to see that member do, and what she has the ability to do, is signal when we are going to see that change, because she did outline the problem just like I did. She has an opportunity to make those changes. When are we going to see them?

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, extortion is a serious and deeply harmful crime for which the Criminal Code already provides some of the strongest penalties in the world. That being said, we recognize the growing impact of extortion, including new and more sophisticated forms, and this is why this government is committed to doing more.

On this side of the House, we know that tackling serious crimes requires more than slogans. It requires strong laws, yes, but also real investments in prevention, in law enforcement and in a justice system that is tough on criminals and smart about protecting our communities. That is the approach Canadians expect from the government, the government that they elected just a few months ago, and I hope the Conservatives will join us in delivering just that.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise for the third time today. It seems like I was just on my feet. It is great to be here.

I will take this opportunity, because I originally asked my question of the former minister of transport and international trade, to wish her well in her new role. I will also tell the parliamentary secretaries on the other side to maybe get their résumés ready, as I hear there may be some other shuffling in cabinet.

My question was one of the major questions in the election. The Prime Minister made a very grandiose promise, which turned into a bait-and-switch situation. He said to Canadians that the government would eliminate all interprovincial trade barriers by Canada Day. It sounded like a great promise, and won him some votes I am guessing, but the reality is that it was never possible.

This is one of the many promises the government has broken in less than six months. The Liberals said they would cut spending, and we are likely going to have the largest deficit ever in Canadian history, excluding wartime and pandemic eras. They said they were going to tackle crime, yet we see crime continuing to rise. They said the economy would grow the fastest in the G7, and it turns out it is actually growing the slowest. We have a series of these broken promises.

Getting to the specific promise of free trade in Canada by Canada Day, the government also told us that it would contribute \$200 billion in economic benefits. The reality is that a tiny number of interprovincial trade barriers have been removed. They are the federal trade barriers, which represent a minuscule portion of the barriers. There are still barriers to selling alcohol direct to consumers. There are still many barriers for professionals or tradespeople who want to work in the various provinces across the country. There are still many barriers for transportation. There are different rules for different roads across the country.

There are also many different regulations across the country for the manufacturing and distribution of safety devices. Quite frankly, in order to have a toilet on a construction site in Ontario, one needs a different toilet than one does in Manitoba. Does that make any sense? These trade barriers very much still exist. They are still very much real.

I will give the parliamentary secretary an opportunity to respond, but I want to lay out my question. I am hopeful. I know that notes are often prepared by the PMO, but perhaps he can show his freedom, as the independent and intelligent member I know he is, and respond to my question, which is very simple, concrete and tangible: How much economic benefit have we realized from the minuscule, tiny reduction in interprovincial trade barriers?

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• (1850)

Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will answer that question in detail.

Every year, internal barriers to trade and labour mobility cost our country nearly \$200 billion each year. That is a staggering figure for people here and at home. That represents lost opportunities, lost investments and lost growth. Now imagine what we could do with that \$200 billion. We could have stronger communities, thriving communities and better-paying jobs for Canadians. That is not just an economic stat; it is really a call to action for people in here and in the country.

That is why our government made a clear commitment to remove the unnecessary trade barriers and build a strong and more unified Canada from coast to coast, and we are keeping that promise. In June we passed the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and eliminated all federal exceptions in the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

With that, we sent a clear message: Canada is open for business, not just globally but internally as well. We heard from businesses and workers across the country, and their message was crystal clear: Stop duplicating rules, reduce red tape and make trade within Canada easier.

The Liberal government leads by example. Where federal regulations stand in the way of free movement, where they overlap with provincial rules or impose unnecessary burdens, we are removing them. We are committed to doing our part. If something is good enough in one province or territory, it does not require additional federal red tape. That is fairness, that is common sense and that is true leadership.

We are fast-tracking the regulatory process. Over the summer we consulted with businesses, workers, territories, provinces and everyday Canadians. Their voices are reflected in how we will implement the new legislation. We are not working alone. At their June 2025 meeting, the Prime Minister and the premiers committed to concrete actions to build one Canadian economy.

Together with the provinces and territories through the Committee on Internal Trade, we are doing the following: One, finalizing a mutual recognition agreement on consumer goods to be in place by December; two, expanding mutual recognition in the trucking sector to align regulations and reduce transportation costs; and three, implementing a 30-day service standard for recognizing professional credentials across the provinces so Canadians can move, work and succeed wherever opportunity calls.

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These are not just bureaucratic changes; they are real reforms that will unleash Canadians' potential. They will allow our businesses to grow, our workers to move freely, and our economy to operate in one united, efficient and resilient market, because no one should be penalized for doing business across provincial lines, and no Canadian should be held back by arbitrary rules when seeking opportunity elsewhere in their own country.

Further, the government has brought together industry, premiers, provincial governments and labour to coordinate on areas where we can cut red tape, increase trade and support Canadian businesses. This has included, most recently, a trucking hackathon aimed at reducing barriers in the trucking industry, as well as a summit focused on supporting Canadian steel and shipbuilding industries in building new vessels here in Canada. That is the vision of a modern Canada, united not just in spirit but in practice.

We are building the kind of economic future that Canadians deserve, one without internal walls, one with shared prosperity and one where every Canadian has the freedom to work, thrive and trade.

• (1855)

Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, as I said, those are wonderful words. If they had been said in the election, they might even have been deserving of some support. However, that is not what the Prime Minister promised. He looked Canadians in the eye and he misspoke the truth. He misled Canadians to believe that he would be able to eliminate all interprovincial trade barriers by Canada

Day. That has not happened. By the parliamentary secretary's own acknowledgement, that has not happened. That is a classic bait-and-switch.

Instead of having interprovincial trade barriers eliminated, the Liberals are now peddling a plan to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers. Those are two very different things, to say that we are going to eliminate the trade barriers and simply deliver a plan to eliminate the trade barriers in the future with no hard deadlines.

Mike Kelloway: Madam Speaker, I think we can all agree that Canadians are putting in the work. They are building businesses, supporting their families and contributing to their communities. The least we can do is get out of the way, cut the red tape and become more lean in our regulatory processes.

Improving internal trade is not just a policy goal. It is not esoteric. It is a practical and pragmatic step in improving the lives of Canadians. That is what we are doing. We saw that in June with substantial legislation that was passed. We are seeing that with collaborations with each premier and territorial leader of this country. That speaks volumes. Canadians are ready to be bold and ambitious, and we are going to be there with them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:58 p.m.)

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