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Thursday, November 9, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 9, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

- (1005)
[*English*]

DEPARTMENTAL RESULTS REPORTS 2022-23

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to table, in both official languages, on behalf of 90 departments and agencies, the departmental results reports for 2022-23.

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SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2023-24

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (B) for the financial year ending March 31, 2024, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages, the supplementary estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

* * *

- (1010)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 45 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

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CANADA LABOUR CODE

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012.

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

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the honour today to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The first report is the 32nd report, entitled "Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities".

[*Translation*]

I am also presenting the 33rd report of the committee, entitled "International Assistance in Support of Gender Equality".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these reports.

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 9th report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, in relation to Bill C-20, an act establishing the Public Complaints and Review Commission and amending certain acts and statutory instruments.

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

[*Translation*]

VETERANS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Veterans, on the national monument to Canada's mission in Afghanistan, which states:

That the Committee denounces the government's about-face and lack of respect for the rules in deciding not to award the design of the commemorative monument to the team linking the artist Luca Fortin and the architectural firm Daoust Lestage Lizotte Stecker, which won the competition conducted by a team of experts set up by the Liberal government itself.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]***DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE AND
CANADIAN FORCES OMBUD ACT**

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-362, An Act to establish the Office of the Ombud for the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, to make related amendments to the Contraventions Act and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts.

She said: Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce my private member's bill to give the Office of the Ombud for the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces more independence.

I would like to thank the member for North Island—Powell River for seconding this bill. She does a tremendous job as NDP critic for veterans.

Over two decades, many Canadians have raised serious concerns about Canada's military culture, including cases of sexual misconduct. Despite the Deschamps and Arbour reports, hearings in Parliament and appeals from survivors, the Liberals have failed to address these systemic problems.

My bill would establish that the Office of the Ombud would report directly to Parliament and not the Minister of Defence. This independence is essential to ensuring that Canadian Forces personnel and DND employees can trust in the process and receive help. Importantly, Canada's current military ombudsman has asked this government to make his office completely independent.

The Liberals have refused to take action, but we have done enormous work to address the challenges within the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. This bill is an essential step.

I thank the advocates who have helped to get us to this point, and I encourage the government to support this bill.

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

* * *

• (1015)

NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-363, An Act to amend the National Defence Act (sexual offences).

She said: Madam Speaker, I rise to table my second private member's bill, an act to amend the National Defence Act, regarding sexual offences. Again, I would like to thank the member for North Island—Powell River for seconding this bill.

This bill would amend the National Defence Act in order to remove certain sexual offences committed in Canada from the jurisdiction of the military justice system. It would implement one of the recommendations from former Supreme Court justice Louise Arbour to transfer all cases of sexual offences by military members to civilian authorities.

It has been 18 months since the Arbour report, and the Liberal government has failed to introduce legislation to do this. However, for many survivors of sexual misconduct in the military, this prob-

lem is urgent, and they are tired of waiting for the Liberals to do the right thing. New Democrats stand with the women in the Canadian Armed Forces, who continue to wait for a real culture change in the face of sexual misconduct and assault in the military. Survivors deserve justice.

I thank the survivors for their bravery, and I urge the Liberal government to support this bill and show real commitment to ending sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

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

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CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-364, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing).

He said: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for Peterborough—Kawartha for seconding this bill.

I want to thank all my colleagues who are a part of the rural crime caucus that we have in the Conservative Party. During the first term of the current government, we struck the rural crime task force. We consulted with Albertans and Canadians from coast to coast. We put together a report called "Toward a Safer Alberta". That report had numerous recommendations in it, including legislative changes that could be made. Even though we have been through the pandemic, the rural crime statistics still apply today. The police have done what they can. They have reorganized themselves.

Governments that are not in charge of the Criminal Code have done everything they can to take this seriously, and there seems to be a new-found interest across the way in the plight of rural Canadians. We can just imagine someone setting up a chop shop or a meth lab in a rural area, far away from the various police stations and communities, which is done purposefully to avoid detection. They cause absolute hell for people in rural communities, because the crime from organized crime elements is absorbed by just a small number of residents. That is why this bill is so important.

I encourage my colleagues across the way to give consideration to it. It would change the Criminal Code at the time of sentencing and make it an aggravating factor if somebody is purposefully targeting somebody in a rural area, where proximity to emergency services and police services is a very difficult thing.

It does a number of other things, including strengthening provisions for sentencing, when it comes to using or carrying a weapon to a crime scene. It also changes the term "dwelling" to "place", because lots of break and enters happen to barns and Quonset huts. Lots of other valuables are kept in storage in rural areas.

Routine Proceedings

I really encourage all my colleagues in the House to take a look at the bill. Let us get this bill adopted post-haste.

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

* * *

● (1020)

CONSUMER-LED BANKING ACT

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-365, An Act respecting the implementation of a consumer-led banking system for Canadians.

He said: Madam Speaker, Conservatives want to get Canadians back in control of their financial freedom. Right now, Canada's oligopoly of six banks controls 93% of Canadians' business. Those banks also have a monopoly on Canadians' financial data. Canadians do not own or control their financial data; the banks do.

Our common-sense plan, called consumer-led banking, would force the banks to give consumers back control of their financial data and, on their consent, share that with competitors who would fight for Canadian financial business. This would create competition, drive prices down and bring financial freedom to Canadian families.

If we compare Canadian banks to those in the U.K., right now, Canadians have bank fees that average \$14.50 to \$15 a month, average transactional fees of \$1.40 and average overdraft fees of \$25. In the U.K., which has this legislation, these fees cost zero dollars. Mortgage rates in the U.K. today average 5.99% versus Canada, which is 6.99%. That is a difference of 100 basis points.

Consumer-led banking legislation forces the government to stop dragging their heels and bring forward the second report on open banking, which has been sitting on the finance minister's desk since May and, within six months, to table common-sense, consumer-led banking legislation. This has been promised now for four years. In this way, Canadians, not the banks, can control their own financial data and financial future once again.

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

* * *

PETITIONS**FAITH OBSERVANCE**

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

I am tabling a petition today prior to Remembrance Day. In just under a week, 227 residents of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo signed a petition. They object to recent changes by the Department of National Defence that outlaw any sort of faith observance or prayer at Remembrance Day ceremonies. The petitioners are obviously unhappy with the state of affairs that was outlined in a recent memorandum.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first is with respect to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the repeated warnings of rising temperatures over the next two decades that will continue to bring widespread devastation and extreme weather.

The petitioners bring to our attention that in Canada today we are seeing increased flooding, wildfires and extreme temperatures. They are calling on the Government of Canada to move immediately with bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving the necessary targets that Canada has set to reduce emissions by 2030.

● (1025)

FOOD SECURITY

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition is from community members in Kingston and the Islands regarding food programs in schools. They recognize that around the world, these programs are essential to the health, well-being and education of students, with over 388 million children in at least 161 countries receiving free or subsidized meals at school. The petitioners indicate that Canada is the only G7 country without a national school food program.

The petitioners from the Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School community and residents of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington region call upon the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to prioritize funding a national school food program through budget 2024 for implementation in schools by the fall of 2024.

ASBESTOS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am tabling e-petition 4375 today. I believe this is the first time this issue has been raised on the floor of the House of Commons in any form and the first petition.

I want to thank the person who initiated this petition, Mary Ann Sjogren-Branch, and Julian Branch who brought this to our attention, as well as Prevent Cancer Now and other networks of grassroots citizens. They are concerned about the presence of asbestos in drinking water. This is an under-studied and unregulated problem. Believe it or not, many municipalities rely on old cement water pipes to deliver water to millions of Canadians and the pipes contain asbestos fibres. When they crack, break or deteriorate slowly, asbestos fibres are getting into our drinking water. As far as we are aware and health studies show, asbestos is very dangerous to us, whether inhaled or ingested, including in our drinking water.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are calling for the Government of Canada to take urgent steps to assess the health risk of asbestos in drinking water, to establish a federal-provincial-territorial committee to establish drinking water guidelines for asbestos, to do a complete inventory of asbestos-contaminated water pipes, release this data publicly and develop a plan to replace asbestos-cement water pipes. There are a number of other elements to this petition. The petition draws this to the attention of all members in this place because if we check our own communities, we may find that members' constituents are relying on cement pipes for drinking water that are contaminated with asbestos fibres.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise to present a petition on behalf of my constituents.

I rise for the 24th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The NDP-Liberal government is failing to get results for the people of Swan River amidst a crime wave that has swept through the rural town of 4,000.

A recent report from the Manitoba West district RCMP revealed that within 18 months, the region experienced 1,184 service calls and 703 offences committed by just 15 individuals. Ten prolific offenders were responsible for 133 violent offences. One individual was responsible for 217 calls for service alone.

This is why these community members are asking for action. They demand jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders. The people of Swan River demand the Liberal government repeals its soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community.

I support the good people of Swan River.

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today, and I will present them briefly.

The first is seeking to support the health and safety of Canadian firearms owners. Petitioners are aware sound moderators are the only universally recognized health and safety device that is criminally prohibited in our country. The majority of G7 countries have recognized the health and safety benefits of sound moderators, allowing them for hunting, sport shooting and reducing noise pollution.

These petitioners are calling on the government to allow legal firearms owners the option to purchase and use sound moderators for all legal hunting and sport shooting activities.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition indicates it is well established the risk of violence against women increases when they are pregnant and justice requires that an attacker who abuses a pregnant woman and her preborn child be sentenced accordingly and that the sentence should match the crime.

Petitioners call upon the House of Commons to legislate the abuse of a pregnant woman and/or the infliction of harm on a pre-born child as aggravating circumstances for sentencing purposes in the Criminal Code.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I am proud to rise in this House to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in Markham—Unionville. This petition calls for additional transparency from clothing and retail companies surrounding the supply chain process with respect to working conditions and environmental regulations.

This petition calls on the federal government to require those companies to adhere to standards that ensure no human rights abuses or forced labour exists anywhere within the supply chains. It also calls for similar standards to be implemented that prevent environmental damage within supply chains and asks that companies that do not meet these standards face meaningful consequences.

• (1030)

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first one is from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about how easy it is for young people to access sexually explicit material online, including violent and degrading explicit material. They comment how this access is an important public health and safety concern.

Petitioners also note that in an era in which we say we do not want violence against women, there are serious harms that come from this sexually explicit material including the development of attitudes favourable to the harassment of women and sexual violence. As such, the petitioners are calling on the House of Commons and the government to pass Bill S-210 quickly and forthrightly.

The second petition comes from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the age and consent verification of those depicted in pornographic material.

The petitioners are asking the government to follow recommendation 2 from the 2021 Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics report on MindGeek, which would require that all content-hosting platforms in Canada verify age and consent prior to the uploading of content.

Bill C-270, the stopping Internet sexual exploitation act, would add two offences to the Criminal Code. The first would require age verification and consent prior to distribution. The second would require the removal of that material if consent is withdrawn. As such, the petitioners are calling on the House of Commons and the Government of Canada to pass Bill C-270 to stop Internet sexual exploitation.

HEALTH

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be short today; I only have four petitions to table.

The first petition is from Canadians who are very concerned about the NDP-Liberal government's attack on access to natural health products.

Petitioners note how, through the last omnibus budget bill supported by the NDP and the Liberals, access was threatened through new rules that would mean higher costs and fewer products available on the shelf. New so-called cost recovery provisions would impose massive costs on all consumers of natural health products and undermine access for Canadians who rely on these products. Provisions would also give the government substantial new arbitrary powers around the regulation and withdrawal of products.

Petitioners note the old system was working fine and call on the Government of Canada to reverse the changes made in the last NDP-Liberal budget that imposed additional costs on users of natural health products, noting that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition expresses support for a private member's bill, Bill C-257, which would add political belief and activity as prohibited grounds for discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Petitioners know how fundamental and important the free exchange of ideas is in a democracy and that discrimination on the basis of political beliefs and threats to employment and the like, against those whose political beliefs an employer or others may disagree with, undermine the free exchange of ideas.

Bill C-257 seeks to remedy that. Petitioners ask the House to support Bill C-257 and to defend the rights of all Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the third petition responds to the aspects of the government's so-called feminist international assistance policy. Petitioners note that this policy has shown a lack of respect for the cultural values and autonomy of women in the developing world, by supporting organizations that violate local laws and push external priorities at the expense of local priorities like clean water, basic nutrition and economic development.

They also note that the Auditor General has criticized this government's approach to international development for women and girls because it has completely failed to measure results and, fur-

Routine Proceedings

ther, that the Muskoka Initiative launched by the previous Conservative government involved historic investments in the well-being of women and girls and emphasized value for money, results and ensuring that priorities responded to those priorities identified by local women who were receiving and supposed to benefit from this aid.

Petitioners call on the Government of Canada to align international development spending with the approach taken by the Muskoka Initiative, focusing international development dollars on meeting the basic needs of vulnerable women around the world rather than pushing ideological agendas that may conflict with local values in developing countries, and call on the government to measure outcomes.

• (1035)

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the fourth and final petition that I will be tabling today encourages the government to butt out of decisions that should properly be made by provinces and parents.

It notes that in the vast majority of cases, parents care about the well-being of their children and love them more than any state-run institution. The role of the government is to support families and respect parents, not to dictate how they should make decisions for their children.

It calls on the government, again, to butt out and let parents raise their own children.

HEALTH

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of Regina—Lewvan and folks across Saskatchewan, which asks this House and the government to butt out, as my friend said, of natural health products.

The petition draws the attention of the House to the fact that freedom of choice in health care is becoming increasingly curtailed and further threatened by legislation and statutory regulations of the Government of Canada, with regard to this fundamental right for individuals to be able to choose how to prevent illness or how to address illness or injury in their own bodies. Canadians want the freedom to decide how they will prevent illness or how they will address illness or injury in their own bodies.

Canadians are competent and able to make their own health care decisions without state interference.

Routine Proceedings

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to guarantee the right of every Canadian to health freedom by enacting the charter of health freedom drafted by the Natural Health Products Protection Association on September 4, 2008.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1742 and 1743.

[Text]

Question No. 1742—**Mrs. Kelly Block:**

With regard to the finding from the Privacy Commissioner that Canada Post's Smartmail Marketing Program contravenes section 5 of the Privacy Act: (a) has the minister responsible for Canada Post directed the corporation to amend the program to bring it into compliance with the Privacy Act, and, if so, what are the details, including the (i) date, (ii) summary of the direction given; and (b) what action has Canada Post taken to change the program to bring it into compliance with the Privacy Act?

Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), Canada Post has a mandate to serve all Canadians and takes matters relating to privacy very seriously. It works closely with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, OPC, whenever there is a complaint. Discussions are ongoing between the minister responsible for Canada Post and the president and CEO of Canada Post Corporation, CPC, regarding the Smartmail marketing program for neighbourhood mail, which was highlighted in the OPC report. CPC has shared that it is looking at ways to better inform Canadians on how their mailing data is utilized, while outlining their options.

With regard to part (a)(i), the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, who is responsible for CPC, and Doug Ettinger, Canada Post's president and CEO, discussed the matter on September 20, 2023.

With regard to part (a)(ii), as Canada Post is an arm's-length Crown corporation, Mr. Ettinger reiterated to the minister Canada Post's commitment to continue working closely with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to resolve the issue.

With regard to part (b), CPC is trusted to handle Canadians' personal information every day and therefore understands that Canadians may be concerned following the release of the annual Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada report, which outlined concerns with regard to the use of address data in CPC's Smartmail marketing program.

CPC is committed to the Privacy Act and the protections it places on personal information, and will therefore conduct a review of its data services program to ensure it lives up to the standards that Canadians expect. In the meantime, CPC will be taking greater steps to increase transparency and awareness of its approach, while streamlining and providing greater visibility for its opt-out programs. CPC will continue to work closely with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

Question No. 1743—**Mr. Adam Chambers:**

With regard to the government's Debt Management Strategy from 2023 to 2028: what are the financial assumptions used by the government to calculate the debt service cost projections, including (i) the weighted average interest rates used, (ii) the amount of new debt issued, (iii) the yearly rollover, (iv) any other financial assumptions?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, debt service cost projections rest on published assumptions.

With regard to part (i), weighted average interest rates are based on, first, the yield curve constructed from the three month treasury bill rate and 10 year government bond rate, as forecast by private sector economists and published in each budget and fall economic statement. See budget 2023's Table A1.1, "Average Private Sector Forecasts". Second, they are based on the weights of short- and long term debt issuances implied by the debt management strategy, typically published as an annex in each budget. See budget 2023's Table A2.2, "Gross Bond Issuances by Maturity".

With regard to part (ii), the amount of new debt required to be issued, or the financial requirement, is the difference between inflows and outflows to the government, informed by the latest projection of the budgetary balance, put on a cash basis. This is published in each budget. See Table A1.8, "The Budgetary Balance, Non-Budgetary Transactions and Financial Source/Requirement". It is also included in the debt management strategy. See budget 2023's Table A2.1, "Planned/Actual Sources and Uses of Borrowings for Fiscal Year 2023-24".

With regard to part (iii), the yearly rollover is the maturity of debt previously issued, that is, legacy bonds and bills that need to be refinanced over the forecast horizon. This is based on actual data relating to the underlying legacy bond issuances, as publicly available on the Bank of Canada website in real time and reported annually in the public accounts, volume III, section 7. It is also included in the debt management strategy. See budget 2023's Table A2.1, "Planned/Actual Sources and Uses of Borrowings for Fiscal Year 2023-24".

With regard to part (iv), other financial assumptions, as forecast by private sector economists and published in each budget and fall economic statement, such as budget 2023's Table A1.1, include adjustments to inflation protected real return bonds to reflect fluctuations in changes to the rate of consumer price index inflation, exchange rate impacts on issuances in foreign currencies and updated actuarial and interest rate assumptions related to pension and benefit obligations.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

The sensitivity of debt service cost projections to changes in macroeconomic parameters, such as changes in interest rates, is published in each budget. See budget 2023's Table A1.15, "Estimated Impact of a Sustained 100-Basis-Point Increase in All Interest Rates on Federal Revenues, Expenses and Budgetary Balance".

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, furthermore, if a revised response to Question No. 1738, originally tabled on November 6, and the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1744 and 1745 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1738—**Mr. Terry Dowdall:**

With regard to lockstations on the Trent Severn Waterway and the Rideau Canal, broken down by location: (a) what operational metrics are regularly collected and reported to Parks Canada management since May 19, 2023; (b) how many hours was each lockstation inoperative during regular hours of operation; (c) how many full days was each lockstation inoperative; (d) for what reason or reasons was each lockstation inoperative; and (e) for each reason in (d), how many hours or days was each lockstation inoperative as a result?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1744—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to VIA Rail's High Frequency Rail project: (a) what are the details of all studies or assessments funded in relation to the project since January 1, 2016, including, for each, the (i) start and end dates, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) vendor, (iv) type of study or assessment, (v) topic examined, (vi) findings; (b) what is the procurement status for each major item required for the project; and (c) what are the details of all goods or services procured to date, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount paid, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of the goods or services, including the quantity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1745—**Mr. Gary Vidal:**

With regard to government funding for organizations representing the Métis people: what is the total amount of funding provided to each organization since 2013, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand at this time, please.

[English]

**NATIONAL SECURITY REVIEW OF INVESTMENTS
MODERNIZATION ACT**

Hon. Dan Vandal (for the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry) moved that Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to take the floor in the most honourable House to speak to a very important topic, Bill C-34, the Investment Canada Act modernization.

Before I get into my formal remarks, perhaps it is a coincidence, although I do not think so, that this morning the OECD released its foreign direct investment numbers, and Bill C-34 deals with foreign entities investing in Canada, Canadians and our communities. Canada came third in the OECD ranking for the first half of 2023. First is the United States, then Brazil, ourselves and Mexico. I think that speaks not only to the confidence of foreign entities, companies and corporations investing in Canada, creating jobs, wealth and great futures for Canadians, but also to what I would say is the idea that confident governments invest in their people and their communities. That is something we, as a government, have done since 2015 with respect to the Canada child benefit, the Canada workers benefit, the implementation of an early learning and national day care plan, the support for students by eliminating interest on student debt, and the two middle-income tax cuts: the first in 2015 from 22% to 20.5%, with roughly \$3 billion to \$4 billion a year, depending on tax filings, in savings for Canadians, and raising the basic personal expenditure amount to \$15,000, which in the fiscal year 2024-25 will deliver over \$6 billion in savings for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Confident governments invest in Canadians and Canadian communities.

● (1040)

[Translation]

I am grateful to hon. members, my esteemed colleagues, for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act.

So far, the House of Commons has voted unanimously in favour of these objectives. The bill has been thoroughly studied by the members of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. We encourage the House to send this bill to the Senate for consideration. Everyone already knows that this legislation plays an important role in our economy and helps make Canada a destination of choice for foreign investment.

Government Orders

[English]

Foreign investment in Canada is booming. We have seen it in the auto sector, the mining sector, the food processing sector, the agriculture sector and so many sectors across this country, because Canada is a destination of choice for foreign investment. It creates jobs. It creates futures.

[Translation]

The act helps create business-friendly conditions based on a stable and clear set of regulations.

[English]

We need a stable and clear system in place to attract foreign investment, and Bill C-34 would do exactly that.

[Translation]

The act encourages economic growth and employment. It provides for intervention only if an investment is potentially harmful to Canada's national security, but it also permits quick action and judgments as circumstances warrant. That is what we intend to accomplish through the amendments made by Bill C-34.

The time has clearly come to modernize the Investment Canada Act and bring it in line with the times. Our industries are still some of the most dynamic in the world. However, Canada is confronting unprecedented geostrategic and national security challenges.

[English]

Indeed, Canada remains a destination of choice for foreign investment. It continues to grow and to create good middle-class jobs from coast to coast to coast. This investment helps businesses prosper and grow, creates good-paying jobs and ensures strong economic growth that benefits all Canadians. Canada has a long-standing reputation for welcoming foreign investment and a strong framework to promote trade while advancing Canadian interests. In fact, Canada has one of the earliest and most robust screening processes for foreign direct investments. The Investment Canada Act, the ICA, was enacted 38 years ago, in 1985. The act allowed the government to review significant foreign investments to ensure that these benefits exist. It was updated in 2009 to include a framework for a national security review of foreign direct investments.

The world in which Canada now operates is increasingly characterized by the complexity of linkages between economic competition and the geostrategic clashes. We see it on a daily basis. Globalization has brought new threats to Canada's national and economic security, but of course many benefits also. Canada must have the tools and resources to protect its assets from economic threats to national security when those are deemed so. The Investment Canada Act must, therefore, also continually adapt to these considerations. The complexity of these dynamics can be seen in the increased volume of activity under the act in recent years. Indeed, there have been more national security reviews since 2020 than in the entire previous decade. The review process is also increasingly complex as international transactions and ownership structures are increasingly becoming more complicated and, in some locations, more opaque.

The proposed modernization of the Investment Canada Act is designed to make the review process more efficient and transparent. Bill C-34 sets out a series of amendments to improve the national security review process of foreign investments and to modernize the Investment Canada Act. Collectively, these amendments would be the most significant legislative update of the act since 2019. These amendments also represent one of the multiple steps the government has taken to ensure that we can defend our economic interests, contribute to global supply chain resiliency and protect our national security. This, in turn, would help us to attract stronger partnerships with our allies to foster economic growth. A stronger foreign investment regime attracts good, beneficial investments into Canada, ones that would create high-quality jobs and opportunities for all Canadians. We have seen this with the \$7-billion investment by Volkswagen and the multi-billion dollar investment by Stellantis. We see it with Honda and Toyota, in Alliston and Cambridge, where they continue to invest hundreds of millions of dollars, and billions of dollars initially, in creating quality good-paying jobs for Canadians here in the province of Ontario, with a supply chain that stretches from coast to coast.

Defending our economic interests and protecting our national security interests are of critical importance, especially in the current climate of rapidly shifting geopolitical threats. This issue is a non-partisan one. During the six sitting days that Bill C-34 was debated, the House has repeatedly stressed the need to modern the ICA to achieve those objectives. The House ultimately decided, in a unanimous vote, to refer the bill for study, because we all recognized how important it was to get these amendments right so we can protect national security while ensuring that we are not chilling useful, good investment.

Canada's foreign investment regime must adapt to the speed of innovation, which we know moves very quickly these days. In recent years, intangible assets in the knowledge economy, like intellectual property and data, have grown in importance in defining Canada's economic strengths and, at the same time, pose new challenges in terms of how these are to be managed in order to ensure that the benefits occur to Canada and Canadians. The government recognizes the value of the intangible economy, its growth and the relevant opportunities for all Canadians, particularly in artificial intelligence and intellectual property. These new innovations are driving new ways of doing business, with huge opportunities for Canadians. The government will support this growth as it helps drive Canada's economy and supports highly skilled, good-paying jobs.

It is great to see the city of Montreal become a cluster for artificial intelligence, with a number of companies investing in that city. It is great to see the Kitchener-Waterloo corridor here in Ontario continue to be the leader in the tech sector. It is great to see the city of Toronto continue to see the investments from domestic and foreign firms in fintech, and so many other types of businesses in this knowledge economy, but to do so—

• (1045)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am just wondering about relevance. We are talking about foreign investment into Canada and about Bill C-34. The hon. member is talking about artificial intelligence and investment in Montreal, which has absolutely nothing to do with the bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member started out his speech talking about the bill, and I trust he will come back to it. There is some leeway in the way members address the subject.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I sit on the industry committee with the hon. member, and I appreciate his intervention. We will always talk about the Investment Canada Act and how foreign companies are investing into Canada and creating good-paying, middle-class jobs for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. That is what I am doing in my speech this morning.

Tools such as the Investment Canada Act must also be modernized to offer additional protections in light of changing geopolitical and technological advancements and to prevent hostile actors from exploiting Canada's expertise and capacity for innovation. We must all be aware of geopolitical risks, and that they and instability are now fixtures in our operating environment, especially for businesses. Hostile state and non-state actors pursue deliberate strategies to acquire goods, technologies and intellectual property. They do so in ways that are fundamentally incompatible with Canada's interests and principles. We also know that foreign investments can be used as a conduit for foreign influence activities that seek to weaken our norms, values and institutions.

Members will recall that the Investment Canada Act played an important role in Canada's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As early as March 2022, we issued a policy statement saying that any investment, controls or influence by the Russian State will also support a determination by the minister that there are reasonable grounds to believe that such an investment could be injurious to Canada's national security, regardless of its value. The statement sends a clear message about our commitment to protecting Canada's economic security from unwanted investment. Moreover, Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy is clear that the region will play a critical role in Canada's future over the next half-century. The significant opportunities for economic growth in the region are also accompanied by challenges related to the objectives of certain world powers that do not share our democratic and liberal principles.

We must respond to this reality in a number of ways, including in the way foreign investment is assessed and examined. In short, the Investment Canada Act plays a key role in protecting Canada's economic interests from hostile foreign actors. It is broad in scope and

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allows Canada to respond to changing threats that may arise from foreign investment, while protecting Canada's openness to beneficial international investment.

Again, I would like to say that this morning, the OECD stated its numbers for foreign direct investment in Canada, which OSFI operates through the Investment Canada Act to a large degree. Canada, for the first half of this year, came in third place behind the United States and Brazil. That is all the OECD rankings of over 30 countries. We are on the right path of continuing to grow the economy, attracting foreign investment from all over the world, along with our domestic companies investing. The act is broad in scope and allows Canada to respond to changing threats that may arise from foreign investment, while protecting Canada's openness to beneficial international investment.

The package of amendments proposed in this bill is designed to assure businesses and investors that Canada has a clear, predictable and stable regulatory regime. The nexus between technology and national security is clear and is here to stay. Rapid technological innovation has provided Canada with new opportunities for economic growth, but it has also given rise to new and difficult policy challenges.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

More and more, Canada is being targeted by hostile actors. That threatens both our national security and our prosperity. Our government must therefore adapt our tools to more effectively defend us against current and future threats.

All around the world, foreign investments are now coming under much closer scrutiny from a national security standpoint, also considering various factors such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the repercussions of climate change on security, global supply chain disruptions and changing geopolitical considerations.

We are equipping ourselves today to face the threats of tomorrow. Canada will remain a destination of choice for foreign investment.

[*English*]

Now, more than ever, we need to make sure we are doing everything we can to foster an innovative, healthy and growing economy. The guidance and decisions issued over the past several years make clear that some transactions, particularly those by state-owned or state-influenced investors, may be motivated by non-commercial interests and imperatives that could harm Canada's national security.

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I will repeat that these types of investments in sectors deemed sensitive currently face enhanced scrutiny under the Investment Canada Act. Our government believes that an effective review regime must be robust, transparent and flexible to adapt to a changing world and now is the time to make these changes. I believe the last changes were made in 2009. That is why we stand today to vote in favour of this bill, which represents the most significant amendments to the ICA since 2009.

We are making important moves now to review and modernize key aspects of the act while ensuring that the overarching framework to support foreign investment to grow our economy remains strong, open and, I would add, flexible. Our record as a government makes it abundantly clear that where national security is concerned, we will not shy away from decisive action. Our assessment of risk keeps pace with evolving economic and geopolitical circumstances.

The ICA already gives us much of the authority we need to intercede and address national security risks that can arise from foreign investments. These amendments build on a strong foundation and will improve the mechanics around national security review of investment. Now is the time to act decisively so that we can make sure that Canada will continue to gain the economic benefits of investment while strengthening our ability to address threats to our country and ensure its future prosperity.

We recognize that Bill C-34 has undergone a rigorous, robust study spanning across 11 meetings. I applaud the members of the industry committee on this process. During those meetings, we heard from a variety of legal and subject-matter experts, who testified about the benefits that foreign direct investment has on Canadian businesses, the importance of protecting Canada's intellectual property and the need to ensure a regime that is capable of tackling the emerging national security challenges that Canada and our security partners are facing in the liberal democracies of the world.

We have engaged meaningfully with opposition members to discuss their perspectives and concerns and have worked collaboratively to bring new amendments that will further strengthen the bill. We have worked together to ensure that Canada's foreign investment regime continues to be the gold standard.

Bill C-34 will provide us with better tools to protect our national security. It will also help to bring Canada into greater alignment with our international partners and allies. My colleagues heard from witnesses at INDU about how important it is for Canada to have a regime comparable to its allies. Having a comparable regime helps to address common threats and maximize our collective effectiveness.

● (1055)

[*Translation*]

We all know that the amendments proposed in Bill C-34 will contribute to that important balance. We have to protect Canadians and Canadian businesses while ensuring that investors continue to see Canada as a destination of choice.

[*English*]

Yes, Canada is the first destination of choice for foreign investment.

We know that Canada and our allies share similar national and economic security concerns. Our allies are concerned with threat actors operating in multiple jurisdictions to secure a monopoly in critical access in technology. We see that with critical minerals. It is becoming increasingly more important to share information with allies to support national security assessments to prevent these threats from happening.

This new information-sharing authority strengthens co-operation between Canada and other like-minded countries to defend against an investor that may be active in several jurisdictions seeking the same technology, for example, and having motives ill toward. That said, Canada would not be obligated to share such information where there are confidentiality or other concerns.

I want to thank my esteemed colleagues for their attention today. I can assure members that our approach is pragmatic, principled and collaborative. It provides a solid framework to address evolving geopolitical threats while allowing Canada's review regime to be more aligned with our international allies and in the interests of Canadians. The collaborative efforts during the INDU committee ensure that we meet these goals, which is why I believe that this bill, as amended, should be adopted and referred to the Senate.

We are confident that with Bill C-34, Canada will continue to encourage positive investment that will grow our economy and create good jobs in all ridings across Canada. I do not think there is a riding in Canada that does not have some form of foreign direct investment in it or that is not affected by foreign direct investment. It should always be done in a positive, long-term and sustainable manner without having to compromise on national security. We know that in today's world there are actors, foreign-state actors and non-state actors, who have ill intentions towards the liberal democracies of the world, including our blessed home here in Canada, and so we need the best of both worlds.

I hope all of us can work together to stand for Bill C-34 to get it to the Senate for further study and make this bill law to strengthen Canada's economic and national security.

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It has been a pleasure to speak to this bill this morning. It was great to see the OECD comment with respect to Canada's reputation for foreign direct investment and coming into third place for the first half of the year. We have seen flows in foreign direct investment via countries across the world, with Canada being increasingly the destination of choice. There are the Volkswagen investment and the Stellantis investment, as well as Honda, Toyota and other entities. There are investments in Kingston, investments in Northvolt in Quebec and investments in B.C. that are happening. Across the board, we see foreign companies choosing Canada to invest their dollars for their shareholders to create wealth here in Canada. It is something that is great to see. We need to encourage it from all sides of the House.

I thank hon. members for their attention this morning. I look forward to hearing their questions and comments.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, in general, Conservatives like elements in Bill C-34. However, we believe that the bill does not go far enough.

In the spirit of collaboration, Conservatives put forth 14 amendments and only four were agreed to by our colleagues across the way. It is funny, because the Liberals always say not to worry, that they will work collaboratively across the aisle in committee and will get things done.

There is one thing this bill does not do. It took away the requirement for cabinet oversight in determining whether an investment is a threat to Canada's national security. It gives sole responsibility to the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Public Safety.

Why does the government always preach collaboration, but in the spirit of fairness, did not work with Conservatives and other opposition parties to agree to the other 10 of the 14 amendments?

• (1100)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, Cariboo—Prince George is a beautiful part of British Columbia in our blessed nation.

It was great to see that in total, eight amendments were adopted during the committee study of the bill, with four of them being from the official opposition. That is something we can all applaud with respect to where there was collaboration.

In terms of how far the bill goes and does not go, I do want to put on the record this morning that independent of where the investment is coming from, whether it is from Russia, China or any other state actor or non-state actor, all investments will be reviewed if they need to be. In terms of the minister, there will be more added flexibility because the minister would take a look at it rather than it being a Governor in Council decision. That also would provide flexibility.

There are a number of improvements in this bill. It is a vast update from the 2009 iteration. It is great to see that this has happened. I would say, in my humble view, to the member for Cariboo—Prince George that there was a lot of collaboration. I see that now, sitting on the industry committee with my colleagues from all parties, and it is great to see that we continue to go forward in the same manner on other pieces of legislation.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I wonder if the member can speak to the importance of the NDP amendment to clause 8, which would allow for the review of foreign investments or takeovers to consider intellectual property and remedies to retain benefits in Canada.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that very pertinent and direct question.

I believe that amendment was adopted and it has relevance to what the hon. member was referring to in order to ensure that we examine any effects of any rights related to intellectual property where their development was funded by the Government of Canada. I believe that is one of the tangents that the hon. member is asking for.

Intellectual property in itself is something very important in today's world. Intellectual property, in terms of patents being put in place in different jurisdictions, has different effects. We know that intellectual property is something that we always need to examine. It is changing rapidly, and we need to have a regime in place here. One process is with the Investment Canada Act which directly examines this, because it is very important for our national and economic security.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke to the importance of working together with our security partners and our allies. Certainly, over the past eight years, we have watched that relationship crumble to some degree with a lack of interest of even including us in conversations. I am a little confused as to why the government did not respond to our recommendation to provide exemptions to the Five Eyes intelligence state-owned enterprises. They are our allies, people whom we could potentially have a good relationship with and trust each other.

The Conservatives proposed an exemption to prevent an overly broad review process. It was rejected by the government. Rather than focusing on real and serious threats to safety, the government would seem to rather utilize its time and resources on scrutinizing our most trusted security partners.

What is the rationale for not moving forward with that recommendation?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, in terms of Canada's relationship with our Five Eyes partners or groups, we have a very robust relationship. It is a very strong relationship. It is a relationship that has existed for many years, and I would say decades. It is a relationship where day to day, people working for the Government of Canada, our security and defence apparatus, are in contact with their pertinent peers. It is something that all governments need to value and respect. We know that. Canada is at the table on a multilateral basis in many organizations throughout the world.

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In terms of the question that the hon. member had about a review of investments, when we examine foreign direct investments we must have the mindset where we do not put in place exemptions. We obviously understand who our allies are in the liberal democracies of the world, whether it be the United States, Australia, the U.K., or other countries, but putting in place exemptions, I personally feel, is not the right way to pursue the legislative process in the Investment Canada Act. It must be broad enough to handle certain unique situations, but it must be focused in a place so that if investments are coming from state and non-state actors, the process is robust, with the capacity to review them for national security and economic considerations.

• (1105)

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I found the member's speech very optimistic. He said that he sees foreign investment in Canada as a good thing. I agree with him. Everyone wants foreign investment. We are always happy when people want to invest money here. That means our country is an attractive place and there will be job creation and economic spinoffs and so on. I have nothing against that.

There is just one small problem. We need to know what the investment is. We need to be able to look at it, at least. From 2021 to 2022, only 2% of the 1,255 proposed investments were reviewed. I see that as a bit of a problem.

I feel that, sometimes, these investments are serving interests that may not align with ours. We should at least have a way to review these proposals to determine whether they are in our interest or not. Does my colleague not feel his government is a bit too naively optimistic about this?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very important question. Foreign investment is vital to our economy, our national security and our future. We are talking about the future of our constituents.

[English]

When we examine foreign direct investment in Canada, it is very important that this modernized bill, Bill C-34, come through. The last time the ICA was reviewed was in 2009. The economic world and the technological world have changed greatly since 2009. We need this bill to move forward.

The collaboration that was seen at the industry committee was very important. It was great to see. We continue to move forward on this bill, which is in the interests of all Canadians and our economic future.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the hon. member's speech and his answers to questions. What I did not hear from him was an explanation about why he and his colleagues voted against the amendment at committee that would have sent every acquisition by a company headquartered in a hostile state like China or Russia to an automatic national security review. That was a legitimate national security power that we wanted to give the minister, yet the Liberals refused it.

Can the member tell us, please, why his party continues to be soft on China and Russia?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, we are not soft on Russia in any manner. Investments that come from China, Russia or any other state or non-state actors are all reviewed very judiciously and diligently by the folks covered under the Investment Canada Act, and they will continue to do so. We need to ensure that the intentions of people investing in Canada are in our national security interest and that they will help their shareholders in their creation of wealth and so forth.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to a bill that Conservatives believe is critical to the safety and security of Canadians.

At face value, Bill C-34 would amend the Investment Canada Act with the intent to bolster Canada's foreign investment review process and increase penalties for certain instances of malpractice or contraventions of the act. Canadians could consider this bill an attempt by the Liberals to take threats posed by some cases of foreign investment seriously. However, we live in an increasingly volatile world and, as we have seen over these past few months, Canada is not immune to infiltration and manipulation from abroad.

In the past, Liberals have failed to thoroughly review transactions involving Chinese state-owned enterprises. This pattern is repeating itself through Bill C-34. Namely, clause 15 would remove the obligation for any foreign investment to be subject to a mandatory consultation with cabinet.

On this side of the floor, we believe that Canada's economic and security interests are paramount and this bill would not go far enough to protect them. That is why we put forward 14 very reasonable amendments at committee that would have intensified the review process of business acquisitions from foreign state-owned entities. Unfortunately, the Liberals and the NDP rejected all but four of them. They are nonetheless critical to improving the bill, so I will touch on each of them.

First, the government was prepared to pass a bill that would have given carte blanche access to investment from state-owned enterprises, no matter their relationship with Canada. There were no provisions that would require any investment by a state-owned enterprise to be subject to an automatic national security review when the government introduced this bill. Our amendment reduced the threshold to trigger a review from \$512 million to zero dollars, meaning that all state-owned enterprise investments in Canada must undergo a national security review.

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Second, Conservatives introduced an amendment which would ensure that the acquisition of any assets by a state-owned enterprise would be subject to review under the national security review process. It would guarantee that not only new business establishments, acquisitions and share purchases would be considered under the review but also that all assets are included in this process, which is another very good amendment to the bill.

Third, when the government introduced the bill, it failed to address concerns regarding companies that have previously been convicted of corruption charges. This makes no sense to me at all. The Conservative amendment now, fortunately, would require an automatic national security review to be conducted whenever a company with a past conviction is involved.

Finally, the government would have been happy to pass a bill that gives more authority and discretion to the minister, despite multiple blunders over the past eight years to take seriously the real threats posed by some foreign investments. The original bill would have left it to the minister to decide whether to trigger a national security review when the threshold was met. The Conservative amendment addresses this oversight and would make a review mandatory, rather than optional, when the \$1.9-billion threshold is met.

I do not understand why the government would not have automatically included this in the bill. It concerns me that so many pieces of legislation from the government are giving more and more authority to individual ministers and not to those beyond them to make sure that, within cabinet and the oversight of the House, those things are truly transparent and that sober thought has been applied.

These amendments, the four that I mentioned, are crucial elements to strengthening this bill, but the Liberal-NDP government also denied Canadians further protections by rejecting some other key improvements that Conservatives really do feel should have been there.

Witnesses at the committee stressed that many Chinese enterprises operating internationally are indentured to requests from the CCP, even if they are privately owned. That almost seems like an oxymoron, does it not? Instead of taking sensitive transactions seriously, the Liberals and the NDP rejected our amendment to modify the definition of a state-owned enterprise to include companies headquartered in an authoritarian state, such as China.

In addition, the coalition chose to not provide exemptions to Five Eyes intelligence state-owned enterprises. Conservatives proposed an exemption to prevent an overly broad review process, which the Liberals and NDP rejected. Rather than focusing on real and serious threats to safety, the government would rather utilize its time and resources on scrutinizing our most trusted security partners.

• (1110)

This makes no sense. Clearly, the government has struggled to get things done in a timely manner, and this would have been an opportunity for it to be far more efficient and to also show an improving relationship with our Five Eyes partners and allies.

Lastly, rather than supporting our amendment to create a list of sectors considered strategic to national security, the Liberals and the NDP chose to leave the process up to regulation and put it at risk of becoming a political exercise, which Canadians are very concerned about when it comes to the government, where stakeholders may invoke national security concerns to protect their own economic interests. Clearly the government has failed over and over again to show it is truly operating in the best interests of Canadians.

I am glad to say that the amendments we were able to pass turned a minor process bill into a major shift in our nation's approach to foreign takeovers of Canadian companies, but there is still more that could be done to improve it. As it currently written, the bill would give the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Public Safety near sole authority to bypass cabinet and approve projects coming into Canada.

Given past precedent, Conservatives have been sounding the alarm for years on why this would be a critical mistake. I am reminded of when the former minister neglected to conduct a full national security review of partially China-owned Hytera Communications' purchase of B.C.'s Norsat International in 2017.

Twenty-one counts of espionage later, the United States Federal Communications Commission blacklisted Hytera in 2021 due to "an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States". However, it was not until 2022 that the then minister was left scrambling when the RCMP suspended its contract with Norsat for radio frequency equipment.

Shockingly, Public Services and Procurement Canada confirmed that security concerns were not taken into consideration during the bidding process for the equipment. This, of course, raises alarms. The Liberals also failed to consult Canada's own Communications Security Establishment on the contract. Instead, the contract was merely awarded to the lowest bidder. This is also interesting because, quite often, it seems we are hearing of funds being shared by the government with organizations that simply do not do anything for Canadians with the money they are given.

Why was this allowed to happen? Why was a piece of technology meant to ensure secure communications within Canada's national police force contracted out to a company accused of compromising national security around the world, as well as serving as a major supplier to China's Ministry of Public Security?

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Let us go back to 2020, when the government was prepared to award Nuctech with a \$6.8-million deal to provide Canada's embassies and consulates with X-ray equipment. Nuctech is, again, Chinese-based and founded by the son of a former secretary general of the CCP.

Deloitte Canada reviewed the offer and made a staggering recommendation to the government that it should only install security equipment in Canadian embassies if it originates from companies with national security clearances. Deloitte found that Nuctech's hardware and software had advanced beyond the government's existing security requirements to the point that its X-ray machines are capable of gathering information and accessing information networks. This raises huge alarm bells.

Global Affairs Canada did not review Nuctech for risks to national security during its procurement process, nor was the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security asked to conduct its own review. The government often says it will do better and can do better, but these things are happening over and over again. However, all this might have been too little too late, as the government has awarded four additional CBSA contracts to Nuctech since 2017. The government's laissez-faire attitude to national security is simply beyond comprehension.

It does not end there. The government also cannot be trusted to safeguard the security of Canadians because it cannot even follow its own rules. In March of 2021, the minister updated guidelines for national security reviews for transactions involving state-owned enterprises and Canada's critical minerals. Less than a year later, the same minister violated his own rules by expediting the takeover of the Canadian Neo Lithium Corporation by Chinese state-owned Zijin Mining. Once again, this was done without a national security review.

• (1115)

To make matters worse, the minister defended his decision by refusing to order them to divest from Neo Lithium while ordering three other Chinese companies to divest their ownership of three other critical minerals firms. It is confusing to me that the government would be so inconsistent. The hypocrisy is astounding. The government is once again picking winners and losers, and it is disconcerting who they are choosing to be winners. This time, national security is on the table. This cannot be allowed to continue.

We have seen a pattern of missteps by the government on how programs and projects are approved. Over the last eight years, there has been an unacceptable shift toward putting more power within the hands of ministers and outside advisory councils, with little to no accountability to this place. We certainly see that, and Canadians see it, too. There is less and less of a sense of responsibility in this place to Canadians. It is as though the government can simply go ahead and provide its ministers with legislation that gives them a carte blanche ability to do things, along with organizations and advisory councils that are outside of this place and do not have the proper oversight that the House of Commons, which reflects Canadians, certainly should have.

Often, we find that appointed advisory councils are established at the minister's discretion prior to a bill even being signed into law.

That just shows the incredible lack of respect of the Liberal government to due process in this place.

Other times, we see that the Liberals just cannot seem to pick a lane. With Bill C-27, for instance, the Privacy Commissioner's new powers to investigate contraventions of the Consumer Privacy Protection Act were diminished by a personal information and data tribunal. In this tribunal, only three of its six members were required to have experience in information and privacy law—

• (1120)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member for a point of order, and I believe it is about the noise in the lobby. The Sergeant-at-Arms will address the issue.

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville has the floor.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for making note of that, which I appreciate.

In effect, the tribunal was equipped with power equivalent to a superior court of record, which could overrule any opinion of the Privacy Commissioner.

With today's bill, we see the government choosing the path of consolidated power in the hands of two ministers. The Conservative Party will continue to push for the deletion of clause 15 to ensure that cabinet decision-making is central to the investment review process, and not a ministerial power grab. Perhaps we are looking for assistance from the Senate on that.

Cabinet decision-making is at the heart of executive power of our system of government. We want to ensure that no single minister can make the same mistakes that we have seen repeated here time and again. Canadians are depending on us to push for these things to take place. They are sensing less and less of an influence and control, as the democratic individuals in our country vote for the people who sit in this place, including ministers. Therefore, it is really important that we continue to push the government to include the whole process, especially including as well that cabinet intervention.

The Liberals missed their chance to broaden the scope of Bill C-34 so that it would be applicable to changing geopolitical realities. It was a chance to ensure that Canadians and Canadian interests would have a dominant say in what would get built and what would get purchased in our country, how our resources would be managed and, above all, ensure they would be protected from complex and risky foreign interests.

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Within my own province of Saskatchewan, there is a great deal of concern about the movement into our country, even in regard to purchasing of our land. Canadians are concerned about all of it, but if there is one thing Canadians are very concerned about, it is that our land belongs to Canadians and that our agricultural, industry and others are not taken over by foreign entities.

I asked the government earlier in the debate on this bill why Canadians should allow the minister to strip away any sense of accountability to cabinet or the House and empower himself in such a way. It is not in the best interests of Canadians. It is not in the best interests of any minister who is concerned about ensuring that he or she doing what is absolutely best for Canadians by limiting it to his or her own office and to the bureaucracy, rather than taking into account the voices across the House and within cabinet that represent Canadians.

When we form government, Canadians will breathe a sigh of relief on so many levels. They can rest assured that we will always take a thorough look at the long-term implications of foreign investment with respect to how they would affect our constituents, our economy in the long term and our reputation as a safe and reliable destination for international investment and for the investment of Canadians.

As I have a few minutes, serving on the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, I want to take advantage of this opportunity to speak on behalf of my communities and my constituents, indeed, all Canadians, and thank our veterans and our serving members as well our reservists, who are potentially facing deployment in the near future. Everyone who serves our country and is deployed or working within the system of National Defence deserves our greatest respect and support. I encourage everyone to please ensure they go out to the Remembrance Day services. I know many have taken place this week. Unfortunately, being here, I have not been able to participate at home. However, we need to ensure that we go out, in large numbers, and support our veterans.

● (1125)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member has put some interesting comments on the record.

For the member and anyone who might be following the debate, let us look at what the member just said and contrast that. Stephen Harper went to China and came back with the investment protection agreement for China and Canada. Let us contrast everything the former prime minister did behind closed doors, in a secretive way, in coming up with an agreement that was enforceable by law. Let us then look at what Bill C-34 would do as a modernization from 2009. What members would find is that, through technology and other advancements like AI, it would make a huge difference. It is one of the reasons we have Bill C-34 today.

Would the member not recognize that the investment protection agreement, and the manner in which it was done under Stephen Harper, contradicts virtually everything the member said in her speech?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, the answer to that is what the previous speaker said. The world has changed incredibly.

China is not what China was at that point in time. The reality is that this—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Would the member like to hear my answer?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can we let the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville answer the question that was asked without heckling?

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, truly, the world has changed, and China is on a significantly different path. The member who spoke previous to me from his side of the floor made it really clear, that we have a lot of circumstances taking place in the world. My perspective, and that of many Canadians, is that the government is far from impacting the influence of China in our country. It is lagging. It is not doing what it should be doing and that is putting our country's national protection at risk.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, my thoughts go out to the Groupe TVA employees and their families following last week's catastrophic loss of 547 jobs. This is a heavy loss for my region, where 24 out of 30 jobs were wiped out. Obviously, we have high hopes that the federal government will be there to support these people. As we proposed yesterday, the Bloc Québécois is calling for a summit as well as a \$50-million emergency fund to support our local media, which are a vital part of our democracy and our communities.

Returning to today's topic and the debate on Bill C-34, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech and one thing jumped out at me. The government tabled this bill so that it could be passed as quickly as possible. However, the Conservatives, who typically advocate for the economy, moved a motion calling for all foreign state-owned companies not belonging to the Five Eyes countries to be excluded from the application of the act, an attempt to slow down foreign investment.

Since 40% of European investment in Canada takes place in Quebec, I want to give the example of Airbus, a French and German state-owned company that, as everyone knows, manufactures airplanes in Mirabel. If the Conservative Party's motion had been adopted in committee, it would have seriously hurt direct foreign investment in Quebec.

I would therefore like my colleague to tell me how she thinks she can block all proposed foreign investments from any country other than the Five Eyes. It is possible to have alliances with democratic states that we can trust.

● (1130)

[English]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, in reference to the first part of the member's intervention, in which he talks about the loss of jobs in Canada, our economy is suffering on all levels and it is due, in a large part, to what was happening before even COVID took place.

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Investment in Canada was running in the other direction because of the lack of confidence in the government and the over-involvement in extending the time it would take to invest in our country. We have seen that on every level. We have also seen the intervention and interference in freedom of speech and the ability to communicate.

There are all kinds of things impacting our ability as a nation to prosper which the government has had a hand. I am very encouraged with the fact that, in due course, this will all change.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, when Stephen Harper was in power, he thought nothing of selling Canada's natural resources to communist state-owned China. He sold Nexen for \$15 billion. He signed the secretive free trade agreement with communist China. The Conservatives are saying that those were different times, that it was a different communist China, that the Liberals were to blame. There is no shortage of blame on selling off our country on behalf of the Liberals or Conservatives.

However, the other thing that Stephen Harper sold off were two world-class mining companies, Inco and Falconbridge, selling Falconbridge to the corporate raider Glencore. Immediately, we lost one of the world-class copper facilities, and we have lost all the investment that used to happen in northern exploration from Falconbridge. Glencore is a corporate raider, and Stephen Harper knew that.

However, if the hon. member is talking about how dangerous the world is today and how much things have changed, why does her leader refuse to get security clearance so he knows what he is talking about when we are dealing with the international crises facing us. Why is he the only leader in the history of the country refusing to take his responsibility seriously and get the clearance so he actually knows what he is talking about in dealing with issues, whether it is China, Hamas or any of these issues facing us today?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I always enjoy listening to what the member has to say. Seriously, we all have clearance. The reality is that the government is doing a horrific job of caring for Canadians.

I am very proud of the fact that my leader is resonating across this nation, bringing people hope, bringing people a sense of being valued. He understands that when he moves across the floor as prime minister, his role will be as first servant to our country, not someone who will take advantage of his elitism and his ability to undermine the very basic foundations of this nation that Canadians are desperate to have again.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always something when the NDP members stand and slander another member of Parliament, whether it is the leader or another member of the official opposition—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question of security clearance is not slander. I would ask the member to withdraw that comment. That was a cheap shot and it undermines his credibility.

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is very subjective, but it is debate, and we are going to avoid going there.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, if you could, just be judicious in your comments.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I want to ask our hon. colleague why a common-sense amendment to modify the definition of state-owned enterprise to include any company, entity headquartered in an authoritarian state like China could fail? Why would an amendment that seeks to list specific sectors necessary to preserve Canada's national security rather than a systematic approach fail? Why would an amendment that would allow the Government of Canada to maintain ownership of intangible assets that have been developed in whole or in part by taxpayer funding fail? Why would an amendment that would allow the minister to go back and review past state-owned acquisitions through the national security review process to allow for a more flexible review process fail?

Why did the NDP-Liberal government coalition block these amendments?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I wish I could get into the inner workings of the minds of our Liberal-NDP and now Bloc coalition members to see why they do what they do.

From the examples I have given, we certainly sense, know and have experienced that the government has failed miserably, over and over again, to give good reviews and do what it should do on behalf of Canadians. Perhaps this is just my view and that of the folks where I come from, but it seems the government has a different attitude toward some of these countries that should not have the access they do to foreign investment in our country. We want to see Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will have to leave it at that.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by drawing members' attention to an important event that is happening tomorrow.

Last week at the opening cocktail reception for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue international film festival, Steve Jolin, known as Anodajay to rap fans, was awarded the National Assembly medal for all of the work that he does to protect cultural vitality. Sandy Boutin from the Emerging Music Festival and Madeleine Perron from the Abitibi-Témiscamingue cultural council also received awards.

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Why am I talking about this? The reason is that, following his first album *Premier VII*, featuring the hit song *J'te l'ai jamais dit*, Anodajay, an artist from a remote region who raps in French, put out a second album called *Septentrion*, containing a cover of the classic song *La Bitté à Tibi*. His version is called *Le Beat à Ti-Bi*. Tomorrow, November 10, his record label, Disques 7ième Ciel, will be celebrating its 20th anniversary at none other than the Bell Centre. This record label, which was established 20 years ago, promotes rap and is likely the definitive source for French rap music in North America, with artists such as Koriass, Samian, Manu Militari, Alaclair Ensemble, Souldia, and many others, including Fouki and Zach Zoya, who is originally from Rouyn-Noranda.

I should mention that Rouyn-Noranda will be at the Bell Centre tomorrow to celebrate the record company's 20 years, and I also wanted to acknowledge the talent and fearlessness of Steve Jolin. This will be a great day for Quebec rap.

Today, I rise to speak to Bill C-34 and its critical importance for us Quebeckers. This bill amends the Investment Canada Act. The Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-34, which strengthens the federal government's powers regarding oversight of investments that could compromise Canada's national security. More specifically, Bill C-34 reinforces the minister's authority, giving him the power to impose conditions during national security reviews and to accept undertakings to mitigate national security risks.

These essential amendments are a logical evolution in an increasingly interconnected world where foreign investments play a vital role in the economic development of both Quebec and Canada. Consider the minerals needed to produce technological goods and electrify transportation. All mineral production becomes essential, even strategic, and therefore becomes a national security concern. Consider life sciences or quantum technology businesses or artificial intelligence start-ups. In these sectors, any investment by a foreign government or a foreign firm, from a country such as China, would automatically be subject to an initial review to prepare for an in-depth study. It would be subject to a national security review and systematically rejected unless the investor can convincingly demonstrate its real benefits, meaning its net benefit for Canada. This is an important point.

Bill C-34 and the new critical mineral policy should put an end to the acquisition of resources by foreign-controlled firms that renders our industry completely dependent. This is something I vigorously defended at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. These are good mechanisms for Quebec and Canada. They protect our supply chains, our businesses and our sovereignty from ill-intentioned foreign investments. Each new review process essentially copies what is done in the United States, creating the harmonization that our businesses have also been calling for. By passing Bill C-34, we are increasing the chances that the U.S. will continue to see us as a trusted partner, which is a condition for being a preferred supplier and, most importantly, for being integrated into their supply chains.

The U.S. has agreed to include Canada in its critical minerals supply chain, and, importantly, it has backed off on the most protectionist measures in the Inflation Reduction Act, the IRA, since Bill C-34 now meets the requirements, the main one being to align our security policies with those of the United States. This is an es-

sential prerequisite for including Canada in its industrial modernization strategy, in particular the development of the electrification industry. I have participated in not one, but two ministerial missions on these topics in Washington. I went there two years ago with the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development and last year with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, who was accompanied at the time by the Minister of National Defence. That shows how current these policy issues are and how vital they are for maintaining our competitive edge.

• (1140)

I do thank the government for its openness in committee. The government agreed to clarify the fact that purchasing a company's assets is the same as purchasing the company itself. If a company owns a mine and resources, and we purchase that company, we also get the mine and resources. This is very important, because it means that the transaction is subject to the act. This clarification was necessary, particularly in the case of intangible assets, such as intellectual property patents, where there was a gap in the previous version of the act. It is crucial that our laws protect our national interests, including intellectual property.

There may also be a flaw in the government's overall approach when it comes to protecting intellectual property. Does it go far enough? During our study of Bill C-34 in committee, several witnesses pointed out that the government could be doing more in that regard.

We took a more nuanced position on certain amendments. I supported the idea of considering intellectual property when reviewing transactions because it strengthens our national security and protects our strategic assets.

I want to take this opportunity to mention that other ideas emerged during the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology's work. I will start with a fundamental value: transparency. One of the most important changes that the Bloc Québécois and I argued vigorously in favour of had to do with transparency provisions. That was a major issue the witnesses raised and one that came up in the technical documents that were submitted.

I insisted on the need for greater transparency around national security in the decision-making mechanisms. That calls for more information from agencies responsible for decisions related to national security. That is a legitimate request that comes largely from the professionals who support the parties involved in this type of transaction, as well as from anyone who wants to understand how the decisions are made and which criteria are taken into account.

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The minister's obligation to make their decisions public represents significant progress. This will improve the public's understanding and enable individuals, businesses and all stakeholders to better understand the process and the reasons for national security-related decisions.

We got a commitment from the minister to disclose certain types of information and require parties to a transaction to disclose the names of individuals benefiting from the new company resulting from the acquisition of or merger with the Quebec or Canadian company. We are firmly committed to acting in the best interest of the Quebec nation and to ensuring that the preservation of our national interests is in harmony with our democratic values and our pursuit of open and transparent governance.

Consider, for example, the acquisition of Rona by Lowe's. Rona was one of Quebec's success stories. It was acquired by Lowe's, but we will never know the conditions set by the federal minister. Nearly a decade later, we need to consider the consequences of that. Was it because of local procurement obligations, the need to maintain a head office in Montreal or the need to keep a certain number of employees in Quebec, both at the head office and in the companies? Were those aspects respected? We will probably never know, because the conditions were never made public. If they had been, the public would have been better informed and it would have been easier to hold the company to account regarding whether or not Quebec's interests were respected. Let me remind the House that we lost a head office at that time, and that must never happen again. Greater transparency is therefore an important gain.

Now let us talk about thresholds. The Bloc Québécois urges the government to go much further and to improve overall oversight of foreign investment, with a view to preserving our head offices, our economic leverage and our control over our resources, which Bill C-34 does not do.

I would therefore ask the House to consider a new bill providing for a more complete reform of the Investment Canada Act in this regard. We tried to do it in committee because no one had thought of it when Bill C-34 was created. Unfortunately for us, the government restricted possible amendments to the sole issue of foreign investment as it relates to national security, which is important, yes, but limited. If we could have improved one thing, that would have been a good pick. However, we were unable to go as far as adding a new provision. While this is very unfortunate, I have high hopes that a new bill could be introduced.

• (1145)

I think there was even some degree of consensus around the table that the government missed an opportunity to review the thresholds to which mergers and acquisitions must be subject, particularly when it comes to guaranteeing that foreign investments will have a net benefit for Canada. That is an essential condition for everyone who is interested in foreign investment.

We support Bill C-34, but we will continue to demand loud and clear that the government introduce a new bill to examine and review the other provisions of the Investment Canada Act.

The federal government's blind spot is its failure to protect our economic levers, a critical element that is often overshadowed by

more immediate concerns. The data set out in the annual report from the department's investment division, which was tabled in Parliament in October, present an alarming reality that is getting worse as the years go by.

Of the 1,255 foreign investment projects totalling \$87 billion that were submitted last year, only 24 of them would have been considered to have national security implications had this bill been in effect at the time. Everything we are talking about right now would have an impact on only about 2% of projects. That is far from nothing, but it is not enough either.

The rest, or 1,221 investments, remain subject to the old lax rules with less than 1% of them being subject to a thorough review to assess their true net economic benefit.

Each year, more than 97% of investments are not subject to a review. We have a right to question the oversight capacity for transactions.

This gap in the protection of our economic levers stems from the growing fragility of the Canada Investment Act, with an increasingly high review threshold, allowing the vast majority of foreign investments to avoid any substantial assessment of their impact on our economy. It is imperative that the government deal with this blind spot by strengthening the controls and reaffirming its commitment to preserving our economic sovereignty for the long term.

Over the years, the Canada Investment Act has been watered down. The threshold for a government review of an investment keeps going up. Almost all of the investments slip through and the government does not even have the power under the Canada Investment Act to assess whether each investment is beneficial.

The current act, introduced in the mid-1980s, assumes that full liberalization of investment is a good thing, that just about any foreign investment, whatever it may be, is beneficial, resulting in the loss of decision-making levers and head offices—weakening Montreal's financial sector in the process—the total dependence of our businesses on foreign suppliers, possible land grabs and the loss of control over our natural resources. Doing nothing is disastrous.

By focusing solely on national security, Bill C-34 does not address Quebecers' and Canadians' gradual loss of control over their own economy. In an economy that is in transition, that is no longer something we can afford, not that we could ever afford it.

COVID-19 has also caused us to reflect on many aspects of impacts, including the devaluation of certain head office assets and dependence on supply chains. If we are not producing vaccines, for example, we are dependent on foreign vaccine portfolios. This cost us billions of dollars. I am eager to have this information. If we had domestic companies that could have been protected, maybe we would still have assets, and it would have cost much less to secure the health of our population.

To that end, we invite the government to table another bill to modernize the entire Investment Canada Act, not only the part on national security. National security is important, but so is economic security. In particular, the government should significantly lower the threshold beyond which it authorizes foreign investments without a review.

Bill C-34, which focuses mainly on national security, also raises legitimate concerns for many Quebeckers and Canadians. Although protecting national security is a crucial part of the legislation, it should not overshadow the gradual loss of control over our economy.

As a citizen concerned for our economic future, I call on the government to go beyond a simple review of the Investment Canada Act's national security provisions and to adopt a more holistic approach to modernizing the entire act. National security is undeniably a major concern for any government. However, it is just as important to consider economic security. The economic well-being of the provinces is closely linked to our ability to protect and promote our local industries.

The federal government must pave the way for greater recognition of innovation zones and the efforts made by stakeholders in these vital zones.

• (1150)

For example, Abitibi—Témiscamingue is rich in minerals that are critical to the new economy. We have expertise in this area, and this could put Quebec on the map internationally. Once again, I invite and even encourage the minister and those advising him to recognize our uniqueness and the leaders of my community by working with us to increase economic activity in and around the mines. I also urge them to protect the efforts being made to develop these companies, which are so sought after by foreigners.

The government must act decisively and lower this threshold considerably in order to effectively protect our economic interests.

The Bloc Québécois has raised this concern numerous times, and we have conveyed it to the minister and his officials every time the Investment Canada Act came up for discussion. I have personally done so.

The current threshold is too high. This means that many potentially sensitive transactions are not being reviewed by the relevant authorities. Lowering the threshold for foreign investment will enable the government to better control transactions that could have a negative impact on our economy. That does not necessarily mean that all foreign investments should be blocked, but rather that we must be able to carefully evaluate each case and impose conditions,

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if necessary, to ensure that these investments truly benefit Quebec or the rest of Canada.

By modernizing the entire Investment Canada Act, the government can also put in place mechanisms to encourage investment in key sectors of our economy. Tax incentives, targeted subsidies and other incentives can be used to attract domestic and foreign investment in areas such as technology, R and D, manufacturing and many other vital sectors. The aeronautical field also comes to mind.

In addition, modernizing the act can help ensure that foreign investment does not compromise our economic sovereignty by allowing foreign players to take control of our strategic companies. Appropriate control mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that Canadian companies remain under Canadian control and Quebec companies remain under Quebec's control. This is necessary to protect our interests.

It is important to note that the modernization of the Investment Canada Act should not be seen as an isolationist measure, quite the contrary. We recognize the value of international trade and foreign investment in our economy. However, we have a duty to protect our long-term economic interests. In that sense, ownership of our resources is a fundamental issue.

The government is responsible for striking a balance between national security and economic security. By modernizing the Investment Canada Act in a way that takes both of these aspects into consideration, we can guarantee that our economy will remain, strong, competitive and sovereign.

I want to dig into the pandemic example a little more because there is something interesting there. Some companies, like Air Transat, lost value. Air Canada was in a similar situation. The Standing Committee on Industry and Technology did a study on the Investment Canada Act and its potential repercussions.

I believe that Bill C-34 is essentially the product of the recommendations that came out of the work we did in committee at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of my concerns back then was potential loss of value due to a major economic factor such as COVID-19. Given the current inflationary context, we may still be heading for a recession. Interest rates have gone up a lot. We know that the situation with the Canada emergency business account is key to the survival of our SMEs. About 80% of them have not yet started repaying their loans. Many businesses are in danger.

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Had we been able to lower the thresholds and provide better protection for these businesses, maybe we could have saved these strategic assets. Based on the overall current context, we believe that lowering the thresholds is still appropriate. Economic growth can never be taken for granted.

Lastly, by focusing mainly on national security, Bill C-34 fails to adequately address the fact that Quebecers and Canadians are gradually losing control over their own economy. It is imperative that the government table another bill to modernize the entire Investment Canada Act by significantly lowering the foreign investment thresholds, introducing incentives to stimulate domestic and foreign investments in strategic sectors, and protecting our economic sovereignty.

As I have said before, national security is important, but so is economic security. Our future depends on it.

• (1155)

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have an important question for my colleague.

We proposed amendments, including one that would have made it possible to go back to the current act, since, under the new version, the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Department of Industry could be the only two entities determining whether an investment would be good or not.

If both ministers are from western Canada, Ontario or the Maritimes, and neither is from Quebec, these two ministers would have absolute power to decide whether an investment is good for Canada without considering the interests of Quebec, assuming proposed investments in Quebec are involved. My colleague mentioned some examples in his speech.

Why did my colleague not support the amendment we presented?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague's work on the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, especially his vigorous defence of Quebec's interests. I do want to recognize that. As an entrepreneur himself, he is aware of the requirements and problems that business owners can encounter. His business might not be a likely target for a foreign buyout right now, but who knows. Maybe one day, with globalization, there may be foreign interests that take over in Rivière-du-Loup.

The fact remains that the current law has significant limitations. Should the Conservatives form the next government, I hope they will very quickly table a bill that will address the concerns, particularly about lower thresholds. Protecting our strategic sectors is essential. Obviously, there is the whole issue of transparency.

What my colleague is asking me is this: If a minister is not from Quebec, will he have the same ability to defend Quebecers? That is a perfectly legitimate concern. Quebec's economy is very different. It is built on strategic sectors that often differ from major Canadian sectors. Take aerospace, for example. Canada has no national aerospace policy, which is totally absurd. It results in untended projects, such as the purchase of aircraft. Consequently, the Canadian government is not doing its job to protect the Quebec economy.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to think that Manitoba has a lot in common with Quebec and its industries, such as the aerospace and the pork industries. The other thing we share in common is the fact that we have incredible capabilities and potential.

Bill C-34 ensures there are better safeguards for companies, large or small, whether it is Hydro-Québec, Manitoba Hydro or the small company start-ups. Given the changes in technology and AI, our industries need to be protected from foreign investment. This bill modernizes that and brings us that much closer to providing a higher sense of comfort. I would ask if the member agrees.

• (1200)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I will agree with my colleague from Winnipeg North that our provinces have something in common. I dream of the day when I can go to a Nordiques game in Winnipeg. There is a lot of sharing that we could do.

The economy is changing. I think the member for Winnipeg North would be welcome on the committee because the points he has raised would be very useful around the table. I would like to see him get out of the House sometimes, get his hands dirty, and present these amendments in committee.

I feel that the government has indeed done a diligent job, but within the limits imposed on us by the shackles of Bill C-34. The law needed to be modernized to meet the realities of a new economy.

Right now, the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology is examining Bill C-27. I think everyone agrees on the fundamental aspect of data protection for all Quebecers and Canadians, and especially for children. However, when it comes to developing AI and protecting our cultural sovereignty—and here I am thinking in particular of Quebec's cultural sovereignty, our French language and our accent, which CBC values so much—we definitely need to modernize this law and go even further. This is also important for protecting our start-ups and emerging companies that have patents and those that are working on and developing AI. We have some very painstaking work to do. I thank the government for its collaboration on Bill C-34.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Abitibi-Témiscamingue for his excellent, well-researched speech. He provided us with a lot of information. I really appreciated the fact that he talked about the need for transparency. Rona was a particularly striking example for Quebecers. I think it is important to insist on transparency in relation to the conditions.

I would like the member to tell us more about the notion of net benefit. Sometimes, there are conditions related to maintaining jobs, creating jobs and keeping the head office in Quebec. Those are important things. Could we not think about a long-term net benefit? I am not talking about a commitment of three to six months, but about medium- and long-term commitments.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his comments, which are always cordial but sometimes force us to dig a little deeper.

I will answer his question by giving him an example. Strategic critical minerals are a key issue. North American Lithium, a Chinese-owned lithium mine in Abitibi—Témiscamingue went bankrupt. Investissement Québec had shares in this company, which was put back on the market. In the end, an Australian company took it over, mainly for export purposes, and established partnerships with Tesla, among others.

With regard to long-term strategic needs, it is absolutely critical that Quebec own this resource. Right now, when major investments are made, like the ones the federal government is making in Stellantis, GM and Northvolt, there is no guarantee that supplies will come from Quebec or Canadian supply chains. Will GM vehicles and others have lithium from Quebec or Canada in their batteries? There is no guarantee of that.

The purpose is precisely to consider the long term. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has shown that we can cut five to 20 years from government investment if we develop the downstream supply chain from the mine and bring processing plants to Abitibi—Témiscamingue, like Sayona did. I acknowledge and thank Sayona for doing so, but it is important to have a facility near the mine to process the minerals that are needed at every stage, in other words, from the anode, cathode, chemistry, cell and other steps to the battery and then the automobile. There are economic and environmental benefits.

To respond to the question and concern of my colleague, this needs to be done in Quebec, because that is where the value-added is developed and there is a long-term vision.

• (1205)

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my enthusiastic colleague. His speeches are always very lively and well researched. It is obvious that he really knows his stuff when it comes to anything related to innovation, especially the people who have expertise in his region, Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

I want to come back to the question asked earlier by my colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup. I was rather confused, even surprised, upon hearing his comments. He has been a member of the Canadian Parliament for a number of years and, all of a sudden, he is worried that having ministers from outside Quebec could put Quebec at a disadvantage, because economic interests could be concentrated outside Quebec. We in the Bloc Québécois have had the answer to this question for a very long time. For us, the only way to truly defend the interests of Quebec is to be independent.

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I wonder if my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue could share his thoughts on defending our head offices in Quebec and our economic interests, which are often at odds with the economic interests of the oil and gas sector in the rest of Canada.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques for his excellent question.

I wish there were a reporter in the House to hear what a staunch defender I am of the interests of my region, Abitibi—Témiscamingue, just like my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

Quebec sovereignty essentially boils down to three things. Obviously, one is the ability to collect our own taxes and reinvest them in Quebec's economic priorities, including the battery industry's transformation. Another is the ability to sign our own treaties, as a member. This would include environmental treaties, which the Conservatives are obviously going to brush aside. The last is to pass all our laws based on our national interests, like the Act respecting Investissement Québec.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to rise here today once again to speak to Bill C-34, which would update the Investment Canada Act. I spoke to this bill on Monday. It is now Thursday and not much has happened in the interim. We did consider a report stage amendment and voted on it, an amendment that would have taken some of the powers vested in the minister in this new act and moved them to cabinet. That amendment was defeated, so we are basically back to where we were when it came out of committee at report stage. I will therefore be repeating some of my comments from Monday, naturally.

This act is designed to do two main things. It is designed to ensure that foreign investments in Canada have a net benefit for Canadians and that foreign investments are not detrimental to our national security.

As I said previously, many Canadians will know this act from its first iteration, back in the seventies, as the Foreign Investment Review Act. It was brought in at that time because there was a rash of foreign takeovers, predominantly American takeovers, of Canadian companies. American companies were moving in as the economy was booming in the fifties and sixties. There was money for these companies to expand. They moved north and started to buy up Canadian companies. I remember that at that time, to go way back, there was real concern in Canada about this trend of foreign companies taking over Canadian companies, sometimes moving their operations entirely out of the country, sometimes just keeping them as branch plants of larger multinationals.

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The Foreign Investment Review Act was brought in then to deal with this situation. It reviewed these transactions as they took place, and the Foreign Investment Review Agency approved about 90% of them. Canadians are open to investment. We know that we need investment to grow our economy, but 10% of those applications were turned down by the Foreign Investment Review Agency in the seventies and early eighties. That brought criticism to the agency by both Liberals and Conservatives, who thought we should be open for investment and should not be turning down some of these applications.

In 1984, Brian Mulroney brought in this act, the Investment Canada Act, to replace the Foreign Investment Review Agency with Investment Canada, of course saying he wanted to welcome foreign investment. True to his word, under the Mulroney government, the new Investment Canada entity did not turn down any applications for foreign takeovers.

The Liberal governments that followed Mulroney's, those of Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, had the same record, with not one application being blocked. The Harper government was a different story. Harper blocked the sale of British Columbia-based MacDonald, Dettwiler to the American company Alliance based on both financial benefits to Canadians and the critical technology argument.

On the other hand, in 2012, the Harper government allowed the \$15-billion sale of Canadian oil company Nexen to the China National Offshore Oil Corporation, owned by the Chinese government, and the \$6-billion sale of Progress Energy to Malaysia-based Petronas. Then, on the same day, the Harper government changed the Investment Canada Act to block state-owned foreign investments in Canadian oil and gas companies. It was a good thing but essentially closed the barn door after the horses had left.

• (1210)

Legislation regulating these foreign takeovers in Canada of Canadian companies has changed from time to time over the past few decades. Foreign investment trends have changed as well. The share of investments in Canada by the United States has declined over the past few decades, but it still leads the pack. It is still the main country, not surprisingly, dealing with foreign takeovers of Canadian companies because of its close proximity to us and the history of co-operation between our countries. It is followed by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, of all places, Switzerland, Japan, China, Germany, Brazil, France and Bermuda, although I assume, as I said on Monday, Bermuda and Luxembourg are there because that is where Canadian companies are sheltering their profits; they are not bringing investments from those countries. It is clear that we need to keep up with the times in regulating foreign investment, and Bill C-34 is another example of that.

Information and data are the new oil, and earlier versions of the Investment Canada Act were essentially blind to that. I have talked to numerous companies over the years, especially tech companies. At the natural resources committee and now at the international trade committee and the science and research committee, one story I have heard repeatedly from companies is that while small Canadian companies, especially tech companies, work hard to develop new technologies, say in hydrogen energy or AI advances, when it comes to expanding companies to get their products to market, they

need investments. These companies develop technologies and do all the testing, and when they have a product that people want, they have to invest to expand their operations to get their products to market. We often call this stage the "valley of death" because so many companies fail at that.

In the Canadian tech ecosystem, we do not have big Canadian tech companies that can help invest in smaller companies, so too often the investment they attract is taken over by foreign companies from the United States, Europe or China. With those sales goes the intellectual property, the ideas behind that new technology, and the real core of the company's value disappears from Canada immediately.

The present version of the Canada Investment Act allows companies to report takeovers after the fact, so a foreign takeover could happen and then it is reported to Investment Canada. However, when that happens, for instance with a tech company takeover, we need some way of reviewing the takeover before the transfer of intellectual property happens.

Bill C-34 has a pre-implementation filing requirement for certain investments to give early visibility to situations where there is a risk that a foreign investor will gain access to sensitive assets or information immediately on closing a deal, because if critical intellectual property is involved, it is usually too late to stop the transfer of that information if it is done after the fact. It is not like the old days when the main value of a company was in the factories it owned or in the rights to natural resources, that sort of thing. This new pre-implementation filing could help put a stop to that, where necessary.

As an aside, on top of this, we really need to develop domestic measures to help develop and protect intellectual property here in Canada so that companies are better prepared when they get to that stage and can keep intellectual property in Canada, where it can be used to help grow our economy. Canada is the leader in many areas that are now very important in the world of technology, such as AI and, as I mentioned, the development of hydrogen energy and fusion. There are various technologies that we are the leader in, and we risk losing that leadership position if all of this intellectual property gradually leaks away.

Government Orders

• (1215)

What are some other things that would make this bill even better? First, the act should mandate the review of an acquisition by a state-owned enterprise of a company previously reviewed by the ICA. This refers to situations where a foreign company takes over a Canadian company and Investment Canada reviews it, finds the company is okay, as it looks like Canadian interests would be protected, and then okays it. After that happens, sometimes the foreign company is taken over by, say, a foreign state.

This has happened several times with Chinese companies, and I will talk about a couple of them. It is a real concern. I mentioned Monday the story of a company called Retirement Concepts, which owns and operates seniors residences in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec. These are long-term care homes taking care of our seniors. I have told the tragic story of a family's loss of both parents to inadequate care in the Summerland Seniors Village, which is one of the Retirement Concepts care homes in B.C. that is very close to where I live. Suffice it to say that Retirement Concepts has a checkered history of investigations for its operations.

Even after that, in 2016, Chinese insurance giant Anbang, then a privately held company, bought Retirement Concepts. The transaction was reviewed and okayed by Investment Canada, but less than a year after that purchase was okayed, the Chinese government seized the Anbang company and jailed its chairman for fraud. Perhaps it knew something the Canadian government had missed when that review was carried out.

Suddenly, we have the Chinese government owning a company that is one of the largest providers of long-term care in Canada, and certainly the largest in British Columbia. Not only is it one of the largest providers of long-term care for our seniors, taking care of our mothers, fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers, but it is known to provide very poor care for seniors in many situations. In fact, in 2020, the British Columbia government had to seize management control of four care homes run by Retirement Concepts because of continuing problems of poor care. It returned that control just over a year later, but it is an indication of the lack of priority Retirement Concepts has placed on the care of seniors.

At present, I do not see any direct provisions in the ICA that would allow Investment Canada or the minister to review the subsequent acquisition by a state-owned enterprise of an ICA-approved takeover or merger by a foreign private company. We have to change this.

The NDP put forward an amendment that would allow for the review of a takeover by a state-owned enterprise of a previously approved acquisition of a Canadian firm. This could be done by establishing the power to require a mandatory divestment of all Canadian assets by entities in these specific circumstances. This is an example of where we could and should take a big step in that direction.

I have been told the NDP amendment to fix this was ruled out of order because the government claimed it now has the power to enforce the divestment of any state-owned purchase. If that is the case, then it should act on Retirement Concepts without delay. This would not only take the Chinese government out of the business of taking care of our seniors, but would be a step toward taking all for-

profit enterprises out of seniors care. There is not place for profit in our health care system, and that includes seniors care.

Anbang also features in another cautionary tale about foreign takeovers in Canada, one that highlights the risk of exposing Canadians' privacy and digital rights. This was again in 2016. Anbang was very busy in 2016 buying up Canadian companies. The Chinese company Bluesky Hotels took over InnVest, a Canadian real estate company that invests in hotels and owns over 100, in a deal worth \$2.1 billion. It was the biggest owner of Canadian hotels.

• (1220)

It is alleged that Bluesky is just a front for Anbang, because that company initially wanted to acquire InnVest, and the executive in charge of Bluesky is a former employee of Anbang. However, Investment Canada reviewed and approved the takeover. As I mentioned, a few months later, Anbang was seized by the Chinese government.

This development has raised significant concerns regarding privacy issues, among other things. China's Ministry of State Security was reportedly behind the massive cyber-attack against the Marriott hotel chain, compromising the personal information of 500 million guests. This has heightened the concerns of the employees and guests of InnVest hotels. Therefore, we need to amend the Investment Canada Act to allow for a privacy protection review.

Another factor to consider in investment reviews is preventing publicly funded research and development from leaving the country, resulting in the loss of jobs and, basically, the theft of taxpayer dollars. A company called Nemark received \$3 million from the government's automotive supplier innovation program. However, in 2020, Nemark closed its plant in Windsor, where those funds had been used to create new products for General Motors, and transferred the technology and those jobs to its operations in Mexico.

An NDP amendment passed in committee would allow for the review of a foreign takeover, which would consider intellectual property that was developed with funding from the federal government and issue remedies to retain the benefits in Canada. Therefore, a situation such as that of Nemark would not happen again. The foreign investment review would now also include the effect of the investment on the use and protection of personal information of Canadians. This would help prevent such situations as the one we saw with Bluesky and Anbang. The federal and provincial industrial, cultural and economic policies affected by foreign investment would now be included in the review as well.

Government Orders

I will conclude by running through some of the amendments that were passed at committee that strengthened the bill or, at least, changed it.

One amendment was to allow the investment made by a foreign entity, especially state-owned enterprises, to be fully reviewable, regardless of the size of the investment. Before, there was a lower limit that would trigger a review. In addition, in clause 8, there was the NDP amendment, which I mentioned, that would trigger a review on a takeover of a company by a foreign company that would see the loss of intellectual property and technology that had been funded by the federal government.

There is an amendment that would expand the investment review to include partial investments by foreign entities; another amendment would include a non-Canadian who has been convicted of an offence involving corruption as part of the investment review process. Hopefully, if they found out that the head of a company such as Anbang was charged with fraud, that would trigger a review right away and probably result in the cancellation of that transaction.

There is another amendment to impose interim conditions on both the foreign entity and the target Canadian business during the review process, as long as national security risks are not increased. Another amendment that involves national security instructs the minister to provide copies of any order concerning a foreign investment review to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency.

I will finish by saying that, in this new world where ideas and data are more valuable than the natural resources we have so long relied on, we need a new regulatory framework to protect our industries, our workers and our companies.

• (1225)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by the hon. member, and it started with a false premise. The hon. member seems to think he is an expert going back to the Investment Canada Act's introduction on how many investments have been approved or not approved through the process. Of course, he said none, which is completely false. Even in the Harper government, just briefly, there were examples. PotashCorp was rejected by the Harper government, as were the sales of the Canadarm to U.S. interests and Radarsat. Thus, the member should do his homework a little more before he speaks about those issues.

However, on the bill itself, could the member explain why he thinks the government believes that cabinet should not be involved in the decision-making process in any acquisition of a corporation by a foreign entity?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the member was listening carefully enough, because I never said any of those things.

What I said was that the Mulroney government did not—

Mr. Rick Perkins: Not true. I was there.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, all the examples the member gave were from the Harper government, and I praised Harper in the speech. I do not do that very often. I just wanted to point that out. I was saying that Harper changed all that; actually, I could have mentioned PotashCorp and all those things, because that was in my notes as well. I just did not want to go there. I just want to put that on the record.

As to the member's question about cabinet versus the minister, the NDP voted with the Conservatives on that amendment, so I think that settles that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will let the other two figure out the Mulroney versus Harper era.

The member referred to AI. Canada, in very real and tangible ways, is in fact leading the world in certain aspects. AI is so encouraging and important, and by modernizing the legislation, we would be able to have more protection, so we do not have foreign investment coming into Canada and then lose control of some of that critically important AI development.

Would the member agree with that?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I would totally agree.

In my speech, I briefly mentioned the need to really develop and bolster our intellectual property programs and culture in Canada. That is outside this act, which controls investment and the takeovers of Canadian companies. We are studying this in the science and research committee right now, about how exposed a lot of Canadian research and development is to foreign takeover, foreign theft and foreign entities taking our intellectual property because they have the legal right to it.

The value in these companies today is intellectual property. AI is one example. It is lost so quickly and easily. We have to do everything, controlling it not only in these acquisition regulations but also in the period of science and research that leads up to some of these investments.

• (1230)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what was raised here was about the Stephen Harper years.

Stephen Harper sold off a massive amount of natural resources to state-owned Chinese companies in a \$15-billion Nexen takeover, then signed a secretive free trade agreement with China. He handed the Chinese Communist Party baskets of blueberries to show our good faith.

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Now the Conservatives are saying that the world has changed; that was a different Communist government then. They rail about Communist governments now because of the Liberal government. However, the former Conservative government gave up \$15 billion of Canada's natural resources to a foreign state-owned company.

That is the history of the Conservative Party, of Stephen Harper and of Brian Mulroney. It is certainly going to be the history, if ever that dark history is written, of the member who represents the party now. How does my hon. colleague think that the Conservatives could now pretend to defend the national interests, when they sold us down the river every chance they got?

The Deputy Speaker: I would just like to know whether they were blueberries from Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I am sure they were blueberries from British Columbia. They are bigger and better.

I mentioned in my speech the fact of two very significant takeovers that happened during the Harper era. One was from, basically, the Chinese government, in our oil patch; the other was from Petronas, the Malaysian oil and gas company.

Canada has, since its inception, relied on its natural resources to be the basis of our wealth. This is basically our birthright. It is what we have to really develop the Canadian economy. Therefore, I think we have to be very careful about any takeovers by companies that give foreign companies and, especially, foreign governments control over our natural resources, especially one as important as oil and gas.

I think it is ironic, as I mentioned in my speech, that the Harper government banned the sale of oil and gas companies to foreign entities as soon as they approved those two acquisitions.

I think it is certainly something that we have to really be careful of in the future. Hopefully, these incremental changes in Bill C-34 will help us do that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I feel I must rise because of my colleague's unacceptable remarks.

I come from Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. They call us the “Bleuets”. I am offended by my colleague's claim that the best blueberries in the world come from his region. My entire region must be offended, and I would like to give my colleague the chance to take back his comments as a courtesy to the people of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

He may also wish to continue talking about the importance of natural resources in the context of this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should back down now and apologize for one part. I said they were bigger and better. They are certainly bigger in British Columbia. The taste may be up for debate.

I would like to thank the member for the last part of his question. I know he is a real advocate for natural resources in Canada and Quebec, especially forestry.

I am from British Columbia, where forestry has been the driver of our economy since before I was born. It is becoming less important now, but it is still a huge part of our economy.

The history of British Columbia's forestry is a history of foreign acquisitions. A lot of the companies that really control our forest ecosystems in British Columbia were gradually taken over, as 95% of our forests are basically leased out in very long-term leases and tree farm licences in British Columbia to private companies.

Some are held by Canadian companies and some by foreign companies. This whole process has to be really monitored and regulated very carefully if we are to protect the value of those forests for the future, whether it is in terms of timber and fibre, the watershed providing clean water, biodiversity or all the benefits that wild forests can have.

This is, again, something that we should really be looking at when we think about foreign investments in Canada.

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the last minute or so, I have been sitting in my chair contemplating a private member's resolution perhaps in the future to talk about blueberries. The member from B.C. was talking about the blueberries from B.C. My colleague from Fredericton was talking about the lovely blueberries in communities around Fredericton, and there are blueberries in the province of Nova Scotia. I can attest there are blueberries growing even in the province of Manitoba. From coast to coast to coast, and I believe even in Yukon, we can get blueberries, but do not quote me on that.

What we could all agree on is that blueberries are very healthy. We know that for a fact. It is a nutritional powerhouse for one's diet, so we should all be eating blueberries, no matter where they come from. I will wait for the private member's motion at some point in the future to add to those thoughts.

Having said that, I am grateful that today we are debating Bill C-34 and that the Conservative Party did not move a motion for concurrence. That means we actually get to debate the legislation that was intended to be debated. That is how I would start off in terms of good news, in recognizing that the Conservatives have provided us the opportunity to debate the bill. However, members will recall that we did have to bring in time allocation in order to get the bill to the committee, in order to ultimately get it to third reading.

I am going to continue to be a little optimistic. I have listened to the speeches on all sides of the House, and there are a couple of thoughts that come to my mind.

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First, members seem to recognize that it is important that we modernize and update the legislation and justifiably so. Over the last decade-plus, which is the last time we actually saw any form of substantial change to the legislation, a lot has changed.

In the question I posed to the previous speaker, I talked about AI. It is incredible the degree to which AI has grown in the last number of years. It was not that long ago when someone sitting beside me in the chamber said, "Pick a topic, Kevin." I think I can say my first name, Mr. Speaker. I picked a topic and used the example of the Philippines. Moments later a speech that I would apparently be comfortable saying appeared right there, in one minute. It was a detailed speech talking about the Philippines—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, could we have the chatbot version instead of the real one? It might be more to the point. I would certainly be willing to include it, and if we need unanimous consent, I would support that.

● (1240)

The Deputy Speaker: This is getting into debate, and the hon. member can use his first name any time he wants to.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am not that up on technology and social media to be able to talk about chatbots.

The point is, as other members have made reference to, that things have changed considerably, and one of those things is dealing with technology and amplifying the issue of AI.

It is interesting when I listen to the Conservatives, and their critic in particular. They have so many reservations about seeing this legislation ultimately pass. We saw that in their statements today and in the questions they are posing. Earlier today, one of the Conservative members stood in her place and talked about how bad the Government of Canada, that we kind of sneak around to do things, and then asked why we would want a minister to be responsible. I asked the member to reflect on an incident that occurred a number of years ago.

When Stephen Harper was the Prime Minister of Canada, he ventured over to China and I believe brought back a commitment to bring panda bears over from China. What was not well advertised was that he put in place an investment protection agreement. The other day I made reference to it as a free trade type of agreement. The member for Abbotsford stood in his place and demanded that it was not a free trade agreement, but rather it was an investment protection agreement.

We can play with words all we want, but the bottom line is that agreement was done in complete secrecy. Therefore, when Conservatives stand up and talk about how we are going to give all this power to the minister, I think they should reflect on Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the manner in which he put into place a substantive agreement known as an investment protection agreement between Canada and China.

If we contrast that to many of the things the Conservatives are saying during the debate on Bill C-34, I think they would be a bit surprised with what would have happened had they had the same principles they have today back when that agreement was signed with China, because we know what their attitude toward China is today.

I say that because, when I think of the legislation, I believe that having the authority lie with the minister, who has an obligation to consult with the public safety minister, which is often not mentioned, adds a great deal of strength to the legislation. Ultimately, there is accountability for the minister that takes place in different forums, whether it is through question period, orders for return, the minister going to committee or in the form of written letters. Today there are many types of mainstream media outlets that members can go to, as well as social media. There are many different ways in which the opposition is able to track, oppose and raise the level of public debate on issues.

Therefore, I do not share the concerns that members across the way have with this legislation now giving more authority to the minister. The minister can now request a further national security review.

● (1245)

We need to recognize that the primary purpose of this legislation is to protect Canada's best interests on the issue of foreign investment. It is interesting. We have heard in the chamber a great deal about foreign interference. We have had committees study it. We have had a public inquiry of sorts looking into the issue of foreign interference.

Investment is another way in which countries can, in fact, cause issues related to foreign interference concerns. I would have thought that would have elevated the need to see this type of legislation not only being talked about, but also passed.

The New Democratic critic was talking about amendments, as was the Conservative critic. They were talking about the amendments that were not passed. There are two issues that I would highlight, which the members did not reference.

One issue is that, in approaching the committee, the government was very open to improving the legislation through amendments, if the amendments could improve the strength of the legislation. What we saw, as we often see, at least in this government, was a willingness and an openness not only to listen to potential amendments, but also where it makes sense and adds true value in terms of the strength and scope of the legislation, to see the amendments pass. We saw that at the committee stage. We saw significant amendments proposed and passed. Not all amendments passed. A member referenced one of the amendments that he was concerned about, but then he was assured that the minister already would have the authority to be able to do it, and the amendment was not approved.

The point is that today the legislation is even stronger than it was prior to going to committee. That is why we, including me, pushed very heavily to get Bill C-34 out of second reading so that we could get it to committee stage and look at potential amendments.

Members can correct me if I am wrong, but at the end of the day, I believe that the legislation is going to be receiving all-party support. I am not too sure about the Green members, but I do believe it will be receiving substantial support.

Government Orders

I know there are other pieces of legislation that the opposition has concerns about. The Ukraine trade agreement is one of them. Much to my surprise and the surprise of many, it would appear that the Conservative Party might not be supporting that particular agreement. It is important. It is an important part of foreign investment, and let me tell members why.

At the very beginning, back in 2015, when we took office, we made it very clear that as a government we wanted to be there to support Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. I suspect that if members were to do a search in Hansard, they would find that I have re-emphasized that on many occasions. That is the type of action and the type of budgetary and legislative measures that we have put into place to support Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it, not to mention the many other policies to assist in lifting other individuals, including seniors and children, out of poverty.

A big part of that is to recognize that Canada is a trading nation. When I say it is a trading nation, we can look at the number of agreements that were signed off by this government. Never in history has a government signed off on as many trade agreements as this Prime Minister has. That is a clear fact.

● (1250)

No doubt there was some preparatory work done under the previous administration, but the signing off and the finalizing of those agreements were done under this administration. Trade is important to our communities in all regions of our country.

I have referred to HyLife, as an example, in the community of Neepawa, Manitoba. At HyLife, they process literally hundreds, if not thousands, of pigs every month, and likely thousands of pigs are processed every day in Neepawa. Think about the jobs created as a direct result, whether in the farming community or on the factory floor. Colleagues may be surprised to know that the last time I had a tour of the facility, 98% of what was coming off the floor was being exported to Asia.

That particular firm is not alone. I think it amplifies how important trade is and the opportunities that trade provides. Think about investments. Having those trade agreements encourages more investment, foreign investment. When people look at those direct jobs I referred to, they should think about the indirect jobs that are a direct result of those. Farming and working in factories, and every job in between, could be classified as direct jobs. Indirect jobs would be selling cars, and making restaurants, houses and appliances. Those are all indirect jobs because of the economics of having that particular processing facility, all of which demonstrates why trade is so important.

Let us compare Canada to any other country in the world, including the U.S.A., and it has trade agreements that expand the world. As a result, as part of having those special relationships with countries around the world, it sends another message that Canada is not only a good country to trade with but also a good country to invest in. I believe, if we apply that perspective to the advancements we have seen in small businesses in every region of our country, whether small, medium or big, we should all be concerned about how money is flowing into the country and being invested in companies that are already up and running. As I indicated, if we think

back to foreign investments in 2009-10, the world was very different, with respect to technology and AI.

There are so many other factors at play. That is why it is important that we bring forward Bill C-34. By doing that, we are ensuring Canadian interests are, in fact, protected. An ideal example of that would be any foreign company investing in a company in Canada for the purpose of taking it over and then potentially shutting it down, or taking the technological advances or AI development within it and taking it out of the country, thereby limiting potential growth in that area, especially in areas of expertise.

● (1255)

My friend from the Bloc referred to the industries in the province of Quebec. In the preamble of my question to him, I pointed out that there are a lot of similarities between Quebec and Manitoba. Manitoba's aerospace industry is very important. The other day, I met with someone at StandardAero, and we talked about the importance of the aerospace industry and engines. That company has been in Manitoba for over 100 years.

There are all sorts of things that take place in our specialized industries, whether it is aerospace or hydro, again, something we have in common with the province of Quebec. There are certain sectors throughout the country in which I suggest we are on the leading edge, and we need to be very cognizant that some outside characters might not necessarily be acting in good faith when they say they want to acquire company X. That is why it is important that this legislation passes. It is important that the minister has the ability to make those decisions and to work with the Minister of Public Safety.

There are many other ways to ensure there is public awareness and a high sense of accountability, which I alluded to earlier. It is why I am hoping the Conservatives, the opposition, will recognize the value of the legislation. It is now at third reading. It is in a great position to pass and, hopefully, time allocation will not be required.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I chuckled when the hon. member mentioned middle-class Canadians, or those aspiring to be. It is funny how, after eight years, middle-class Canadians are now just trying to stay in the middle class as a result of all the policies of the government, with the affordability and inflation crisis caused by overspending and the debt that has accumulated.

I want to speak specifically about Bill C-34 and the mandatory notice regime. There seems to be a lot of uncertainty within industry right now as it relates to the applications that are in the process, in some cases by minority investors. As for the definition of the mandatory notice regime, and specifically what categories of investment would fall into that, there seems to be a little uncertainty. I wonder if the hon. member can tell us what that would be.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there are some interim conditions that can be placed on investments. Many of the details the member is looking for would probably be best sought from the minister, because not all of it would be covered in the framework of the legislation being put forward.

Have said that, I want to comment on the member's observation, which I suggest is inaccurate. From the very beginning, we have been there to support Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be part of it. Let us compare Canada's record, with respect to interest rates and inflation rates, to virtually any of the G20 countries. I am thinking particularly of the United States. Canada has done reasonably well, very well compared to the U.S., but it does not mean we should not continue to support the middle class. That is one reason we came up with the grocery rebate. Unfortunately, the Conservatives continue to vote against supports for Canada's middle class.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of conversations this morning about the selling out of Canada by past governments, not only by the Harper government but also by the Mulroney government before that, and the signing of the disastrous Canada-China FIPA, where both Conservatives and Liberals, in an interesting coalition, I might add, voted on that.

I will give credit to the Liberal government for trying to fix its mistakes in Bill C-34. I appreciate that. However, I am confused and would love to hear the hon. member's comments. Even though the Conservatives have now recognized some mistakes and are trying to fix them, and they agree with the bill, why are they working so hard to delay the passage of it?

• (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the principles of free trade are something we have been very supportive of. That is one reason we have signed off on many agreements.

Just to add an interesting twist, the coalition today on the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement is the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberals. We are still waiting for confirmation from the Conservatives.

I am hoping we will get a unanimous coalition. I am not too sure about the Greens, to be honest. In terms of the recognized parties in the House, we are still waiting for the Conservative Party to stand up and say that it supports the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement, and to date, there has been no indication. It was the member for Cumberland—Colchester who stood in this place and said that the trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine was “woke” and that Canada was “taking advantage” of Ukraine, which is absolutely ridiculous.

Remember, it was the President of Ukraine who came to Canada in September this year, a month and a half ago, where an agreement was signed. Unbelievably, it is the Conservative Party that is preventing that legislation, that free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, yet it likes to say that it supports Ukraine. It is questionable.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague to elucidate a bit more on the comments by the member for Cumberland—Colchester, because we know he was part of that group that travelled and that

had \$1,800 worth of champagne and other things. The Danube Institute partly supported that, alongside my cousin, Dan McTeague, and supposedly paid for all that. Imagine that.

The Danube Institute is promoting an attack on the work being done to defend Ukraine, claiming that it is woke, that we would have members of the Conservative Party in Europe meeting with those who say there is a “deep state” over NATO.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he has had a chance to look into this mysterious trip with bottles of wine and expensive dinners that were given to four members of the Conservative Party, including the member for Cumberland—Colchester, and this issue with the Danube Institute document that says it is going after so-called “woke” politics and NATO's support for Ukraine.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I know there have been very serious allegations, and those allegations have been referenced both on the floor of the House of Commons and in committee, I understand.

I believe the Conservatives owe an explanation. There is this far-right extremism coming out of the benches. They got thousands of dollars' worth of wine, not to mention main courses. Who paid for all of that? Was it the individual members of Parliament?

I think a lot needs to be looked into and, hopefully, the Ethics Commissioner will do that. Hopefully, the ethics standing committee will be afforded the opportunity to study the matter, because there are some real concerns. Is there a connection between that and some of the positions the Conservatives are taking today on the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement?

I think there is some merit. I have heard it on several occasions on the floor of the House, and I was told by one or two people that it is even starting to come up in the ethics committee. I do not know the details, but I sure hope that is not what the stumbling block is, in terms of the Conservative Party's refusal to allow the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement to go to committee.

• (1305)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the issue of sponsored travel is coming up frequently in this place. I brought this up before, and I am interested in the hon. member's take on this.

The member for Timmins—James Bay, in 2022, took a sponsored travel trip to Berlin, Germany, which was an expensive \$10,489. The trip was paid for by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung foundation. In 2007, NGO Monitor found that FES partnered with politicized NGOs to attack Israel.

Mossawa is one of the main Israeli-Arab NGOs involved in the political demonization of Israel. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay actually held a joint press conference in 2004 with Hezbollah. My question—

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Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. Obviously we struck a nerve about the \$1,800 bottle of wine and the Danube Institute, but what the member is saying is a falsehood.

If the hon. member has evidence, I would have him submit it, if they will submit who actually paid for the \$1,800 bottle of wine that the member for Cumberland—Colchester drank. If he wants to submit evidence, we would ask the Conservatives to give the evidence of who paid for all those drinks.

The Deputy Speaker: We are descending into debate, and debate that is not necessarily on Bill C-34, which we are supposed to be discussing.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, talking about striking a nerve, my question to the hon. member who just gave his speech is this: Would he agree that having a press conference with Hezbollah is ill-advised?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, what I would suggest is that there are some very serious allegations and concerns related to the far right within the Conservative caucus today, and a trip that was made, for which the issue of ethical behaviour has also been raised. At the very least, let the standing committee on ethics, and possibly the Ethics Commissioner, become engaged on it.

I think there are some things that need to be answered. I was talking a lot about the importance of trade. My point is that I sure hope that the behaviour of some of the Conservatives within the caucus is not what is preventing the trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine from being advanced at committee stage, because this is so important, not only for Canada but also for Ukraine. It would not only be in the best economic interests of both countries, but it is also the timing, given that there is a war taking place in Europe, and the powerful message it could send. I would still like to think that the trade agreement will, in fact, be passed at all stages, including royal assent, before Christmas.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House today and talk about Bill C-34, which is the Liberals' attempt at increasing security on foreign investments in this country.

Before I get under way, I would like to announce that I am going to share my time this afternoon with the hon. member for Yellowhead.

This is an important issue in the country, and it is an important bill, Bill C-34, that we are facing here today. We cannot simply allow authoritarian regimes whose values and goals are fundamentally opposed to ours here in Canada to control important infrastructure or resources in this country. We must protect Canada's national economic and security interests. However, after eight years in power and two years after the industry committee presented this report on the issue, the government is finally trying to take action on the file. I want to acknowledge the work done in the committee both on the initial study and on improving the legislation before us. I think further improvements definitely can be made, but I will get into that a little later.

The world, as we know, is changing every day. Quite frankly, we all know this is kind of a dangerous time right now. National secu-

rity needs to be top priority, even though the government has decided to take \$1 billion out of the national defence fund at this time. It is unreal that the Liberals would even think of doing such a thing. Internationally, we have seen conflicts sprouting up almost every month. We have the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a perfect example of an authoritarian dictator willing to do whatever he wants to get whatever he wants. We look at the resources involved and ultimately how Russia will use violence to violate the sovereignty of its neighbour next door.

Domestically, we are seeing what countries will do to increase their influence and control where they cannot simply invade. Russia and Beijing are actively interfering in our elections, which we know is a fact. Kenny Chiu, whom I sat with in the last Parliament, is not here, because of the interference from Beijing. Also, foreign state-owned enterprises have acquired interest and control in many Canadian companies, intellectual property and other assets. They are gathering data daily on our citizens and they are exploiting that data. Just today, on the front page of the national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, the headline reads "Huawei still filing patents tied to work done with Canadian universities after Ottawa's restrictions." It goes on to say that "The Chinese tech company Huawei Technologies is still seeking patents for research it conducted in partnership with publicly funded universities in Canada, more than two years after Ottawa began restricting funding for academic collaborations with connections to foreign states considered national security risks".

Huawei has filed patent applications for research on 5G wireless; artificial intelligence, which has been brought up in the House in the last hour; semiconductors; and the optical communications done in collaboration with academics and investors at the University of Toronto. We have seen it at Queen's University, the University of B.C., Western University and McMaster University. All those universities, they say, are fulfilling pre-existing contractual partnership agreements. However, let us make no mistake: All of the commercial rights to this property, which has been invented by Canadians and funded by Canadians, are now owned exclusively by Huawei. This is what we are talking about in Bill C-34. I have more to say on Huawei and what it has done in my province of Saskatchewan. I will come to that.

The end goal, obviously, is to take over as much of Canada's economy as possible in order to make us beholden to foreign powers that have no interest at all in democracy, freedom and the rule of law. We can see this happening all over this country. We see Chinese state-owned enterprises buying up farms, fisheries, mines and other things.

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● (1310)

Even in my province of Saskatchewan, when I drive around, I will see signs in the ditch saying that if people want to sell land, they should call a certain 1-800 number. If they call that number, it could be a third party. Indirectly, what is happening is that somebody in Beijing or China is wanting to buy Saskatchewan farmland. Saskatchewan farmland, as we all know, has gone up considerably over a number of years because, in my province, we are proud of it. We want to feed the world. This is what we are seeing in this country in ditches everywhere. I mentioned Saskatchewan, and I have been to Manitoba, Alberta and elsewhere, and I know there are signs in ditches saying that if people want to sell land, they should call a 1-800 number. When they do, they get a third party talking on behalf of probably China or other countries.

We are in a situation where people need to be able to trust that their Parliament and their federal government are protecting them and their country. Unfortunately, this is another example of the Liberal government's doing something too late with Bill C-34. The bill would not go far enough to address the risks faced by all 40 million of us Canadians. Given recent events, it needs to be much stronger.

I can recollect that in 2021, the industry committee studied the act and put out a report explaining how the act could be improved. Clearly, the government mostly ignored that report, because in Bill C-34, the government addressed only two of the nine recommendations that the committee put forward at that time. Let us fast-forward to this year at the industry committee, meeting once again. My Conservative colleagues were able to make some modifications to improve the bill and address some of the gaps, including important amendments that would ensure a more rigorous review process of investments and acquisitions by foreign state-owned enterprises. Those amendments were to lower the threshold for national security reviews of foreign purchases by state-owned enterprises, make it mandatory for the minister to conduct a national security review when that threshold is met and, finally, create an automatic national security review whenever a company has been convicted of corruption charges. These were important and necessary improvements to the bill. I am very glad that the committee saw the common sense of these amendments and adopted them.

However, the legislation still would not go far enough. The NDP-Liberal government rejected amendments that would have further improved the legislation and properly and fully protected Canadians. One of the rejected amendments, one which I think is crucially important, would have modified the definition of a state-owned enterprise to cover companies or entities headquartered in an authoritarian state like China. I understand the potential concerns with such an amendment; the nationality of the company should not usually be sufficient to label it a state-owned enterprise.

This is where I was going to get to Huawei and the reaction of the industry minister, a couple of years ago, in not making a decision on Huawei. I think it has cost my province of Saskatchewan \$200 million. The province was invested into Huawei for 4G in the province of Saskatchewan. It was waiting for the minister of industry to make a decision on Huawei. It took him months. Finally, he made the decision, but the province of Saskatchewan was into Huawei for over \$200 million, so it had to put on the brakes and then reinvent itself. This has cost

Saskatchewan and others in this country millions of dollars. This is something that our allies in the Five Eyes alerted Canada about long before the minister made the change, and it has cost Canadians a lot of money.

I just wanted to make those points. I am concerned about Huawei, as it is taking information from the five universities still today, when actually Huawei should have been out of this country long ago.

● (1315)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to what the member is saying, and one cannot help but think about the time when Stephen Harper went to China and signed a secretive investment agreement. No one knew about it. Then, we get the Conservatives coming here, criticizing and asking why we would have power go to the minister.

This is good legislation, when we look at the input from the public safety minister and so forth to the minister. The legislation would give strength in terms of protecting Canadian interests when it comes to foreign investments. I thought the member would have been supporting the legislation. Maybe he could provide his thoughts in terms of what some might be perceiving as a bit hypocritical, given the attitude that Stephen Harper had in the secretive deal for investments for China only.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, what has been done is that the authority has been taken away from cabinet. It would rely on one minister. That minister could come from Quebec. That minister might come from who knows where in the country. Obviously that one minister might have a bias toward maybe his or her own riding or province. That is one reason we are a little upset with this. It has to go through cabinet. The more eyes that see this, the better. Only having one set of eyes looking at it is a major concern I see in Bill C-34.

● (1320)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was an excellent speech, particularly on the issues of the amendments to the bill that we managed to get passed. The bill missed the opportunity to do anything other than administrative changes, so we managed to update it to the geopolitical issues we have today. I am sure the minister will appreciate having those powers.

I would like to expand this a little more, because the Liberals voted against our amendment that would have focused strictly on the issue of headquarters in hostile states. This is a big national security issue. It is not to reject it, but just to make it an automatic review. I am not sure why the Liberals would be afraid to have the power to review it and decide whether they want to reject it on that basis.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, as shadow minister, the member has done a great job looking after Bill C-34. The Conservatives put through several amendments. We had a page filled with amendments, but only had three or four passed. A number of them failed because there was a Bloc and Liberal conspiracy against the Conservatives. With what has happened here recently, as we have seen with the fuel pumps and everything happening in the Maritimes, now we know why the Bloc has partnered with the Liberals on this bill. There is 3% of Canadians who are affected in the Maritimes with the energy and 97% are shut out, but now we see why the Bloc has joined the Liberals in this bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's statements are kind of out there.

He does seem to think the Bloc Québécois is pretty important. That is interesting. He says the Bloc Québécois is responsible for removing the tax on heating oil in the Maritimes. Can he tell us which motion or act the Bloc Québécois voted for that made that happen, when that decision is solely within the purview of the current government? That is a question I would like to ask my colleague.

Anyway, I do want to add something about the bill we are debating today because it is easy to get off topic. The Bloc Québécois's criticism of Bill C-34 relates to the thresholds that trigger a review. If we look at all the foreign investment proposals from 2022, the new measures would require a review of only about 10 of those 1,200 proposals. That is barely 2%.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that. Security of investments really is important, but what is being done to implement better mechanisms to broaden the foreign investment security review process?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, this is not about Quebec; this is about everybody in the country. I know he represents Quebec, being a Bloc member, but I will give one example from my province of Saskatchewan.

There have been \$18 billion invested in the Jansen potash mine. It is the largest investment in the history of Saskatchewan. It is done by BHP Biliton out of Australia. It had the first phase, which is \$12 billion, and it just announced another \$6 billion. This is the kind of investment we need and can work with from this company from Australia, which will be headquartered eventually in Saskatoon.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-34, a bill that attempts to strengthen the Investment Canada Act with significant amendments.

As we approach the discussion on Bill C-34, a critical examination is warranted. It comes after an extensive period where our national interests have been left vulnerable to foreign entities.

After eight long years under the Liberal government, the urgency to safeguard our economic and security interests seems to have tak-

en a back seat, as it has taken us this long to look at protecting Canada's economy.

The core concern here is the significant presence of state-owned enterprises, particularly from the People's Republic of China, the PRC, within the Canadian economic landscape. This is not a matter of casting doubt on foreign investment as a whole, which has long been a source of innovation and growth within our economy. However, there is a distinction to be made when such investments are linked to foreign governments with agendas that do not align with Canadian values or interests.

Bill C-34 proposes to strengthen the Investment Canada Act, yet one cannot help but ponder whether the measures are sufficiently robust.

This bill does introduce mechanisms that might allow us to better scrutinize these investments. Indeed, the imposition of stringent penalties and the elevation of national security reviews are steps in the right direction. However, the specifics with which we address the challenge posed by the PRC are lacking.

It is imperative to understand that the issue at hand is not one of mere procedural delays or legislative enhancements. It is a matter of national sovereignty and the integrity of our economic and security infrastructure.

The amendments within Bill C-34 would grant the minister enhanced powers to investigate and intervene, yet there remains an imperative to want to question the thoroughness of this approach.

Have we provided a framework robust enough to contend with the sophisticated strategies employed by state-owned enterprises, particularly those backed by the government in Beijing? The PRC has demonstrated its capacity and inclination to wield economic leverage as a tool of broader geopolitical strategy. The foresight is to anticipate the sectors of our economy that may be targeted for acquisition, and control is crucial.

The legislation mentions the creation of a list of sensitive sectors that would warrant automatic review, yet it does not preclude the possibility of loopholes being exploited.

Let us turn our attention to the particulars of Bill C-34, where we must sift through the substance of proposed reforms.

The bill, as it stands, attempts to pre-emptively secure investments that might pose a risk to national security by instituting a mandatory filing requirement. This is indeed a prudent move, but how we define specified investments and the criteria for such pre-emptive measures must be crystal clear to avoid any grey areas that could be exploited.

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In simplifying the process for the minister to act on national security reviews, we are placing significant trust in the judgment and efficacy of a single point of failure. While streamlining may expedite action, it also bypasses layers of scrutiny that can be vital in making balanced decisions. In the hands of one, the decision may be swift, but the question remains, will it be thorough?

Strengthening penalties for non-compliance sends a clear signal. It communicates the seriousness with which we take these matters. However, the deterrent effect of these penalties lies in their enforcement. Without a track record of rigorous enforcement, penalties on paper may not translate into a meaningful deterrent in practice. We must not just increase fines; we must demonstrate that we will impose them.

Also, granting the minister authority to impose conditions and accept undertakings opens the door to inconsistencies and influence of which we must be wary. When we consider the removal of the Governor in Council's involvement in the initial stages of a national security review, we must ask if we are centralizing power to the point of vulnerability. Oversight is not an enemy of deficiency, but a bedrock of democracy.

• (1325)

In continuing discussion, we must bear in mind the history that brings us to this juncture. We are not operating in a vacuum, but against a backdrop of past decisions and actions that have left us questioning the robustness of our investment review process. As we proceed with this dialogue, it is crucial to reflect on past actions that serve as a backdrop to today's discussions on Bill C-34.

We cannot ignore instances where our review mechanisms seem to falter, where foreign acquisitions proceeded with what some would argue was insufficient scrutiny. The case of Norsat International and subsequent dealings involving sensitive technology raises an eyebrow to the effectiveness of our past reviews.

This is not about pointing fingers, but about understanding the gravity of what is at stake. The acquisition of Neo Lithium Corp. by Zijin Mining and the Canada Border Services Agency's use of Hytera Communications equipment, despite espionage charges against Hytera in another allied nation, illustrates a pattern we cannot afford to ignore.

Our legislative framework should not only close the doors to such occurrences in the future, but also serve as a deterrent. Moreover, the pace of global change does not afford us the luxury of reactive policy. We need proactive measures that ensure the safety and security of our nation's interests. This includes comprehensive reviews of state-owned enterprises' acquisitions, regardless of size, especially when countries with aggressive postures on the global stage are involved.

As we bring these concerns into the present context, the urgency to address them becomes clear. We are at a crossroads where the discussions we make today may shape our economic and national security for years to come.

Bill C-34 is a step, but there is concern that it does not go far enough. We must ask ourselves, is this legislation merely a reaction to the past oversights, or is it a visionary move to secure our future?

While it makes strides in certain areas, it falls short in terms of automatic reviews and clarity in defining strategic sectors. In the ideal world, every investment would bring mutual benefits without compromising our national interests, yet we know the world is far from ideal, and the bill in its current form does not fully rise to the complex challenges we face.

Part of our duty is to ensure the security of Canada's future. Our duty is to enact legislation that does not just respond to yesterday's challenges, but anticipates tomorrow's threats. While Bill C-34 moves to tighten the reins on foreign investment and strengthen our defences, we must ensure it is not a case of too little, too late.

This is not just about adjusting the mechanism of the Investment Canada Act. It is about safeguarding the heart of Canadian innovation and security. Our vigilance in reviewing and improving this bill will demonstrate our unyielding commitment to the prosperity and security of Canada.

Let us ensure that this legislation is more than a response to past oversights. Let it be a steadfast guideline of our future economic sovereignty. This is our duty and it is one we must undertake with the utmost seriousness and dedication.

I appreciate the opportunity to address these crucial issues. Let us proceed with a clear vision and a firm resolve to protect the interests of Canada. I look forward to taking questions.

• (1330)

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I am talking to industry innovators, researchers and even the clean technology sector, they expect the act to be transparent. They expect our national security interests to be protected. While we continue to grow the economy and create well-paying jobs, it is important to take note of our national security interests, but also to protect the interests of our innovators and researchers.

I would love to hear the member's thoughts on that aspect.

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that the protection of innovation, technology and researchers in Canada has been lacking quite a bit in Canada. It seems they are working with such companies as Huawei, and there are no safeguards put in place. The minister promised us in February that these safeguards were coming. Have we heard of anything yet? No, we have not. Unfortunately, that is substantially lacking.

We need to take action now to protect our innovation and security here in Canada.

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• (1335)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by rejecting Conservative amendments to create bright-line rules, such as those regarding investments from companies headquartered in hostile states being immediately referred to a review, and by not exempting our Five Eyes partners, which all clearly show not just democratic values but also market values, we are competing on taxes, environmental processes and investment rules for timely decisions.

Does the member believe that the government has lost a major opportunity to welcome that investment quickly into our country from those countries that are aligned with us, and the opportunity to immediately send a signal to foreign states that want to use our investment rules for their own strategic advantage?

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate that question because the member brought a very specific thing forward when he referred to the Five Eyes and our stance on the world stage.

We basically do not have the same type of security anymore where our Five Eyes are actually partners with us. It seems to be more like “four eyes” now. The problem is that they are leaving Canada out of a lot of security discussions because of the decisions we have made in the past and continue today. The government is lacking a lot of the oversight that needs to be done to protect security and innovation in Canada, which it is not upholding. We are definitely losing out in a lot of areas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncás (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on his speech.

I would like to talk about common sense. I am going to tell a true story and I would like my colleague to tell me if it makes sense.

We are talking about the Conservative Party, who, today, is worried about foreign investments and our national security. However, that same party nearly had a leader who worked as a consultant for a company that is banned in Canada and that my colleague named: Huawei.

That company has been banned by the Five Eyes. Obviously, as usual, the federal government was lagging behind and Canada was the last country in the Five Eyes to ban Huawei.

I would like my colleague to explain how we are supposed to trust the Conservative Party when it allowed a person who worked closely as a consultant with a banned company to be a candidate for leadership of the party.

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Mr. Speaker, that was quite a story he told. Just because someone runs for leadership does not mean they are the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. We have an open process and allow anybody to run.

One of the problems that we have in Canada is companies such as Huawei. The Liberal government took years to finally say that it should not be allowed to operate in Canada. The real story here is about the failure of the Liberal government to stand up for Canadi-

ans in security by making companies such as Huawei available. Even to this day, it is still working with universities to build technology. It just filed patents last week with Canadian universities.

It is shameful that the Liberal government is not standing up for safety and security in Canada.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the provisions in this bill would be to have more security over issues such as potash and MacDonald, Dettwiler, which would have national security provisions.

Could the member give just a quick comment about how important it is to include that element of national security related to the goods, services and natural resources that Canada has?

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Mr. Speaker, it is very imperative that, at any time while dealing with any of our energy sectors, we realize these are opportunities to make sure we are self-sufficient and that we are not going to have issues in the future with a loss of production or a loss of opportunities. We need to make sure that these kinds of companies are going to be safe because they are producing energy, or fertilizer in this case, as well.

• (1340)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to advise that I will be splitting my time with the very hon. member for Brampton North.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to the bold moves taken by the government to address economic and national security threats to Canada through Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act. I would also like to highlight the great collaborative work done during the committee's study to make the bill even stronger.

Bill C-34 sets out a series of amendments to improve the national security review process of foreign investments and modernize the Investment Canada Act. Collectively, these amendments are the most significant legislative update of the act since 2009. These amendments also represent one of the multiple steps the government has taken to ensure we can defend our economic interests, contribute to the resiliency of the global supply chain and protect our national security. This, in turn, helps us to attract stronger partnerships with our allies and to foster economic growth, a strong foreign investment regime and good beneficial investments in Canada, ones that will create high-quality jobs and opportunities for Canadians.

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Defending our economic interests and protecting our national security are issues of critical importance, especially since our current climate of rapidly shifting geopolitical threats. This issue is a non-partisan one. During the six sitting days that Bill C-34 was debated, the House repeatedly stressed the need to modernize the Investment Canada Act to achieve those objectives. The House ultimately decided in a unanimous vote to refer the bill to study because we all recognized how important it was to get these amendments right so we could protect national security while ensuring we are not chilling useful and good investments.

We recognize that Bill C-34 has undergone a rigorous, robust study that spanned 11 meetings. During those meetings, the committee heard from a variety of legal and subject matter experts who testified about the benefits of foreign direct investment on Canadian business, the importance of protecting Canada's hard-earned intellectual property and the need to ensure our regime is capable of tackling the emerging national security challenges that Canada and our security partners are facing. We have engaged meaningfully with opposition members to discuss their perspectives and concerns and have worked collaboratively to bring new amendments that further strengthen the bill. We worked together to ensure that Canada's foreign investment regime continues to be the gold standard. The bill would not only provide us with better tools to protect our national security, but also help bring Canada into greater alignment with our international partners and allies.

The industry committee heard from witnesses about how important it is for Canada to have a regime comparable to its allies. Having a comparable regime would help to address common threats and maximize our collective effectiveness. One example of how we have aligned our regime closely with our allies through Bill C-34 is the new requirement for prior notification of certain investments. The United States, the United Kingdom and Australia all have introduced something similar within the past two years, either through recent amendments or stand-alone regimes.

The United States amended its foreign direct investment laws and added new types of transactions for government review. For the first time ever, it mandated notifications in transactions involving critical technologies, certain critical infrastructure or the sensitive personal data of American citizens. These regulations came into effect in February 2020.

Australia updated its law on foreign direct investment in January 2021. It introduced authorities to protect national security, including powers for the Australian government to require mandatory notification for transactions involving a national security business before the transactions are implemented.

The United Kingdom introduced a new regime for national security and investments in 2021. The U.K. legislation created a mandatory obligation to secure clearance for transactions that would acquire control of a business in 17 sensitive sectors before the transaction is completed.

The new pre-implementation filing requirement for Bill C-34 would allow Canada to have even better and earlier oversight over investments in certain sensitive sectors, especially when they give investors material access to assets and non-public technical infor-

mation upon closing, such as cutting-edge intellectual property and trade secrets.

● (1345)

This amendment would enable the government to prevent irreparable harm through the loss of these intangible assets. Investors would now be required to file notification in time periods set out by regulation.

I want to emphasize that this amendment is a targeted approach limited to only certain business sectors. Across the board, a pre-implementation filing requirement would have an unnecessarily burdensome impact on businesses and investors without improvements to national security protection. Our targeted approach would provide greater certainty and transparency to businesses and investors.

Another example of Bill C-34 better aligning Canada's regime with those of its allies is its introducing the authority for the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, after consultation with the Minister of Public Safety, to impose interim conditions on an investment. This would reduce the risk of national security injury taking place during the course of the review itself, such as through the possible transfer of assets, intellectual property or trade secrets before the review is complete. This amendment is similar to the U.K.'s new power that allows its government to impose interim orders while the review is being conducted, preventing foreign investors from obtaining confidential information or accessing sensitive assets or sites until after the review is complete.

Finally, Bill C-34 introduces the authority for more direct information sharing by the minister with international counterparts for national security reviews to help common security interests. Previously, the minister had a limited capability to share case-specific information with their international allies. We know that Canada and our allies share similar national and economic security concerns. Our allies are concerned with threat actors operating in multiple jurisdictions to secure a monopoly in critical assets and technology. It is becoming increasingly more important to share information with allies to support national security assessments to prevent these threats from happening. This new information-sharing authority strengthens co-operation between Canada and other like-minded countries to defend against investors that may be active in several jurisdictions seeking the same technology. That said, Canada would not be obligated to share such information where there are confidentiality or other concerns.

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I thank esteemed colleagues for their attention today. I can assure members that our approach is pragmatic, principled and provides a solid framework.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments—

Mr. Chris Bittle: I am not done.

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize. When the hon. member said, “I thank esteemed colleagues”, I thought the member was done.

The hon. member for St. Catharines.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I was really getting into it. It was an exciting moment. There was some enthusiasm on the other side, which I think led to further confusion. It is a fault across the board, and we can all take a little blame. I am in the winding-up phase of my speech, and I apologize for any confusion.

To conclude, the collaborative efforts during the industry committee have ensured that we would meet these goals, which is why I believe that this bill, as amended, should be adopted and referred to the other place. We are confident that, with Bill C-34, Canada would encourage positive investment without having to compromise on our national security, getting the best of both worlds.

I thank the INDU committee for all of its work. All of the committee members did outstanding work to get us to a place where, I think, we will have all-party support when we finally vote on this bill.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to ask questions of this member, whom I know well. He is a great human being. The member can put that in his campaign commercial.

I am sure, or at least I am hopeful, that the member will be a member of cabinet. Does he not think that some of these national security decisions, opposed to just being decided by the minister, as per the bill, should go in front of cabinet so the people of St. Catharines, for example, could have a say?

• (1350)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I shared an office together for about a year as articling students almost 20 years ago, which is an awful thing.

I am sure good ministers will always consult with their fellow cabinet members, but keeping this to a couple of ministers allows us to be nimble and allows ministers to conduct a review in the most expeditious way, ensuring not only that there is security but also that business transactions and investments continue to happen.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his enthusiastic speech today, and I greatly appreciate the love we are seeing in the House.

In the opening of his speech, he characterized this bill as bold, although I have heard from our Conservative colleagues that it is not going far enough and is only a small step in the right direction. Could he comment again on the collaborative process at committee and the putting forward of amendments to make this bill as strong as it could possibly be?

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I was not at the committee, but I do know that Conservative amendments were brought into the bill.

It is the role of opposition parties to say that the government is not going far enough or is going too far, which is often where we find ourselves. However, I think the committee has struck the right balance. This is a good step forward and a bold step forward to bring us in line with our allies and ensure that Canada continues the incredible track record of foreign direct investment.

The Minister of Innovation was quite excited today about Canada being third in foreign investments, and I know he does incredible work on a daily basis. This would help Canada continue to succeed into the future.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, being part of the committee, I know there was a collaborative approach.

New Democrats have been raising this issue since 2003, when China Minmetals was buying Canadian natural resources. Unfortunately, the Liberals have a track record of selling our natural resources, whether it be to Inco, Falconbridge or Stelco. A whole series of our natural resources and natural resource industries have been lost.

I would like the member to reflect on whether the Liberals regret selling Petro-Canada for a significant loss in the market at that time, when it was okay for the Chinese state government to own Canadian natural resources but it was not okay for Canadians to own their own natural resources. What do the Liberals think about that as we go forward, given their past record of missed opportunities to protect Canadian companies and natural resources?

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I am a little worried that the member overestimates how old I am. I think the things he is talking about happened when I was in high school. I am not sure how to respond to that.

I do know that the government is committed to national security efforts. That is what this bill is about. The hon. member can talk about decades in the past. We are committed to the future. We are committed to ensuring that Canada is there, that our security investments are protected and that we thrive into the future.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to the modernization of the Investment Canada Act.

As many who are following this debate know, this act was last revised in 2008, so this legislation represents the most significant update to the act since that time. It would ensure that we can address changing threats that arise from foreign investment and would do so while our government continues to welcome foreign direct investment.

Statements by Members

As my colleague before me stated, we are rising in the ranks of foreign direct investment, but at the same time, we are also facing global threats unlike ones we have ever faced before. This is a really appropriate time for us to get in line with other allies of ours and update our act to make sure we are keeping Canadians safe as a whole.

Speaking of Canadians, the other day, a young adult in my riding wrote to my office. He is a first-year political science student. He wrote to me about concerns with foreign interference, and some of what he said was quite interesting. He proposed three different areas in which the Government of Canada could do better in order to make sure we are safe from foreign interference threats.

He wrote to me about the recent statement made in this House about Hardeep Singh Nijjar's murder. However, he went a lot further than just this instance and talked about our democracy as a whole and what we should do to protect it now. He said that we are seeing very bold covert operations taking place in our country, whether it is disinformation campaigns, hacking, political manipulation or espionage. All of these things are rising, and there are concerns regarding the traditional boundaries of espionage. He says, there is a shift toward more overt and covert interference in international affairs by state players.

Interestingly, he writes that countries like China, Russia, Iran and India are assembling economic blocs and seem to be more open to taking chances to further their geopolitical objectives. He further says that although covert operations on Canadian soil are not new, Canada is a desirable target due to its advanced economy, technology and abundance of natural resources. He says it is concerning that these problems are converging and that foreign actors can profit from Canada's defining characteristics by taking advantage of our society's openness and variety. It is in our communal responsibility to confront these threats, and we must work together to stop foreign meddling from undermining the core values of our country.

He continued to talk about strengthening cybersecurity and safety measures regarding actors who seek to take over our resources, which we have seen. There has been concern when it comes to agriculture and infrastructure as well. I thought it was very interesting that a lot of these things tie in.

It is an important time for us to be taking these types of measures to make sure we continue to protect Canadians, Canadian interests and our economy at the same time, doing it in a transparent way as we continue to have more and more free trade agreements with countries around the world. Since our country has more agreements, especially those signed by this government, than any other country in the world, we need to make sure we also have the safety nets in place to make sure that, through these agreements, we do not increase our chances of risk.

This bill is an extremely good effort, and I was excited to see that, through the committee process, many amendments were made to further strengthen this legislation. The Conservatives and the New Democrats have all had input. From the speeches I have heard in this House, it looks like we may differ slightly, but there is core support to make sure that this legislation passes, keeps Canadians safe in the future and continues to increase the economic prosperity of this country.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1355)

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the current conflict in Gaza began, more than 10,000 innocent civilians have lost their lives. Over 4,000 of them are children. More children were killed in Gaza in one month than in any conflict annually since 2019. Eighty-nine UNRWA employees have been killed. This is the highest number of UN aid workers killed in a conflict ever. Nearly 40 journalists have died. They were not terrorists. They were mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, daughters and sons. How many more innocent people's lives will be lost?

When our grandchildren ask us what we did during this crisis, what do we want to tell them? The Prime Minister said that the price of justice cannot be the continued suffering of Palestinian citizens. I agree.

At every opportunity, I have called for a return of all hostages and a ceasefire to save innocent civilian lives. It is the only answer, and I will continue to make this plea: ceasefire now.

* * *

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE REGIONS

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government regards people living in rural areas as second-class citizens, leaving them to contend with inadequate cell service. Since the first day I was elected in 2019, I have been urging the government to make this issue a priority.

Mr. Morin, from Sainte-Aurélie, wrote to me and said that, in the event of a fire or accident, emergency services cannot be reached on a cell phone. Repair people and merchants cannot receive calls and messages without leaving the area.

I am thinking of Mr. Plante, who nearly died in Saint-Victor in 2021 because of poor cell coverage and Mr. Paradis, from Saint-Isidore, who had a heart attack in 2022. The paramedics were unable to communicate with the hospital.

The government must force the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, to require telecommunications companies to develop a reliable cellular network throughout the regions. This is a matter of public safety. One call can save lives.

Will the government finally answer the call and respond to the heartfelt pleas from people in the regions?

[English]

FESTIVALS OF DIWALI AND BANDI CHHOR DIVAS

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the vibrant festivals of Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas, festivals that illuminate our hearts and homes with joy and light.

Diwali, also known as the festival of lights, holds profound significance in our cultural tapestry and is one of the largest festivals celebrated in Brampton. Diwali signifies the victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. During this time, we celebrate by gathering with our loved ones, lighting diyas and exchanging sweets. Diwali is a significant festival uniting us all in the spirit of hope and positivity.

As we gather to celebrate Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas with our loved ones, let us reflect on the importance of family, friendship and the bonds that tie us together as humanity. I encourage all members in this House to join me in wishing all Canadians a very happy Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.

* * *

[Translation]

POPPIES, A SYMBOL OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, November 11, we will mark Remembrance Day. Together, let us wear a poppy on our lapel to honour the memory of all those who fought for our freedom. It is one of the few rituals that brings all members of all parties together.

Chosen for how abundantly it grew in the fields after battles and in military cemeteries after the war, the red poppy, a reminder of blood spilled, is worn on our left side, near the heart, and must be treated with all the respect it deserves for what it represents. By wearing this symbol, we are telling veterans and their loved ones that we stand with them in honouring their devotion.

These days, when current events offer a stark reminder of how our promises of “never again” ring hollow, the poppy also affirms our wish for peace by reminding us of the heavy price we pay to get it back once it is lost.

Let us show veterans our respect.

* * *

[English]

VETERANS

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a retired police officer, I stand up for our veterans.

On the solemn occasion of Remembrance Day, we gather as a nation to pay tribute to the brave women and men who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our great country. Today, we remember the heroes who stood valiantly in the face of adversity defending the values and freedom that define Canada.

As a member of Parliament, I am deeply moved by the sacrifices made by our veterans. We honour their memories by upholding the principles they fought for: peace, democracy and justice.

Statements by Members

Remembrance Day is not only a day of reflection, but also a call to action. Let us strive for a more peaceful world where conflicts are resolved through dialogue and understanding. Let us support our veterans, ensuring they receive the care and respect they deserve.

Lest we forget.

* * *

● (1405)

RUSSEL WILLIAM WOODS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we head toward Remembrance Day, I rise to pay tribute to a great Canadian.

Russel William Woods died during the pandemic, on December 18, 2020, at the age of 96. Russel served in Bomber Command during the Second World War in the Royal Canadian Air Force as a Lancaster tail gunner. Of the 20,000 Canadian airmen in Bomber Command, half were killed in action.

After the war, Russel returned home to Belwood and to farming. He was a founding member of Chicken Farmers of Ontario. He was a devoted member of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 275 in Fergus. He was a loving husband, brother, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

For all of us, he was a great friend and devoted community member, always with a smile and always with a sense of humour.

Russel William Woods was truly a great member of the greatest generation. We will remember him.

* * *

DIABETES

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November is Diabetes Awareness Month in Canada.

Earlier this week, I attended the Canadian screening of *The Human Trial*, a Hollywood documentary by a Canadian filmmaker, Lisa Hepner, on the incredible work of researchers to find the cure for diabetes.

Canada is not only the birthplace of insulin, but Canadian researchers also discovered stem cells, islet cells and developed the Edmonton protocol.

Canadians living with diabetes know that we are united in our support for them as we supported Bill C-237, which established the national framework for diabetes.

Next week on November 14, I will be proud to host the third annual World Diabetes Day flag-raising ceremony in my city of Brampton. I invite all residents to join me.

Statements by Members

Let us continue to combat diabetes together.

The Speaker: I would like to take the opportunity to remind all members to please not use the names of current members of Parliament. We have to refer to them by their riding names.

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FESTIVALS OF BANDI CHHOR DIVAS AND DIWALI

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 12, in my riding of Surrey—Newton and in communities throughout Canada, both Bandi Chhor Divas and Diwali will be celebrated.

On Bandi Chhor Divas, Sikhs commemorate the story of Shri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, as we reflect on the importance of serving those in need and standing in solidarity with those facing injustices.

Diwali brings people together to reflect on the victory of good over evil and the power of knowledge and hope over ignorance and despair.

Please join me in wishing Sikhs, Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and those who are celebrating across our country a very happy Bandi Chhor Divas and a very happy Diwali.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, we know that this NDP-Liberal government and this Prime Minister are just not worth the cost. They want Canadians to believe that they are the saviours of the environment, but their record says otherwise. In fact, we are the only G7 nation that has failed to reduce its emissions.

This NDP-Liberal government does not have an environmental plan. It has a tax plan, and it is failing miserably. Instead of protecting our environment, it has bankrupted our country, our industries and our citizens.

We brought forward a common-sense motion to remove the carbon tax on all home heating, to help Canadians get through the winter, because we live in a winter country, and it definitely gets cold in Edmonton. However, the member for Edmonton Centre voted against that motion and is punishing the hard-working people of Edmonton for simply heating their homes.

Our Conservative common-sense government will completely axe the tax.

* * *

BLANKET BC SOCIETY

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 18 years, Blanket BC Society has distributed close to 700,000 blankets to those in need across British Columbia.

Blanket BC is a non-profit society that aims to raise awareness of homelessness and promote inclusive community service to deliver warmth from the heart to those in distress.

On November 17 and November 18, Blanket BC will host its 13th annual “Drive on the Line” blanket drive campaign along the Canada Line stations from Richmond Centre to downtown Vancouver.

I encourage everyone to join me in supporting Blanket BC on this impactful cause by dropping off socks, scarves, mittens, toques and, of course, blankets to those in need, to fight against the unfor-giving cold.

We all have a shared responsibility to our community. Let us continue to spread love and warmth to our communities in Richmond Centre and in communities across Canada.

* * *

● (1410)

CARBON TAX

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, winter has arrived, and the NDP-Liberal government has left Canadians out in the cold. The Prime Minister's carbon tax carve-out of home heating oil leaves 97% of Canadians without relief, including 90% of Saskatchewan homes heated with natural gas. After eight long years, he is once again pitting region against region and Canadian against Canadian.

The common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234, offers a solution to this divisiveness through long overdue carbon tax relief for farmers. By axing the tax from the on-farm use of natural gas and propane, farmers would save almost \$1 billion between now and 2030.

The alternative is unacceptable. The coalition's plan to quadruple the carbon tax on those who grow the food will make everyone pay more. Farmers will fail, and a great number of Canadians will be forced to make the choice between eating and heating. The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-NDP government is just not worth the cost. After eight years of pushing his carbon tax on Canadians, the Prime Minister announced that he was pausing the carbon tax on home heating oil but not on natural gas. This flip-flop will benefit one region of the country while leaving other regions out in the cold.

When asked why they were picking winners and losers, a Liberal cabinet minister said that perhaps they need to elect more Liberals in the Prairies. I wonder what other policies the Liberals have that are based on the way a region votes. They do not support carbon capture and storage, despite its success in my province of Saskatchewan. They do not support liquefied natural gas projects, and new mining projects have to spend millions of dollars and wait for years just to get through the permitting process.

Fortunately, Canada's common-sense Conservatives are here for all Canadians in all regions of the country.

* * *

WORLD WAR II VETERANS

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to acknowledge two incredible and brave World War II veterans, Major Naib Singh Grewal and Subedar Kanwal Jit Singh.

There were over 365,000 Sikh soldiers who fought with us and our allies during World War I and World War II, and Major Naib Singh Grewal and Subedar Kanwal Jit Singh were two of them.

Major Naib Singh Grewal served from 1939 to 1945, and Subedar Kanwal Jit Singh served from 1939 to 1947. Both Major Naib Singh Grewal and Subedar Kanwal Jit Singh were a part of some of the most decisive battles of the Burmese front at Imphal and Kohima.

Major Naib Singh Grewal is set to celebrate his 101st birthday in just a few days, and Subedar Kanwal Jit Singh just celebrated his 100th birthday in September.

The Indian Ex-Servicemen Society in my home city of Surrey has been essential in reconnecting Indian veterans and ensuring their well-being through events that are put on throughout the year.

As Veterans' Week wraps up, let us all remember the sacrifices they took to ensure our freedom, safety and well-being.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the living wage reflects what people need to earn to afford the basic necessities of life.

In the village of Daajing Giids on Haida Gwaii, working parents need to each earn \$26.25 per hour to afford those necessities. That is the second highest of any B.C. community, and we know many families are struggling to make ends meet.

Why is life so expensive on Haida Gwaii? It is so remote, and the main access is a seven-hour ferry ride to the mainland, and that is seven hours in good weather.

The northern residents tax deduction was designed to help residents of remote communities with affordability. For over a decade, Haida Gwaii residents have been asking the federal government to provide them with the full deduction. It is a simple change to the Income Tax Act, yet it is one that would make such a big difference for families on Haida Gwaii. I urge the minister and the parliamentary secretary for finance to make this change at the soonest opportunity.

Statements by Members

• (1415)

[Translation]

KEVIN LAMBERT

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what a season in the life of Kevin Lambert. Shortlisted for a Prix Goncourt, winner of a Prix Décembre and now, following in the footsteps of Marie-Claire Blais, who incidentally was an inspiration for his latest novel, young writer Kevin Lambert has won the prestigious Prix Médicis, 57 years after his muse.

This is the third time a Quebecker has won the Prix Médicis, following Marie-Claire Blais in 1966 and Dany Laferrière in 2009, and it is a good sign for our literature. I invite people to visit a bookstore and pick up *Que notre joie demeure*. If that title is not available, they can try *Querelle de Roberval* or *Tu aimeras ce que tu as tué*. If those are not available either, people should buy any Quebec book. Our literature is amazing, wacky and creative, and it transports the reader to unsuspected places.

I want to congratulate Kevin Lambert. I want to thank him for making Quebec culture shine and for being a unique voice. I want to thank him for the hours of joy, awe and surprise his pages provide. What a season in the life of Kevin Lambert.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years it has never been more clear that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He told Canadians that, if they just paid their costly carbon tax, the NDP-Liberal government would meet their environmental target.

However, in a bombshell report, Canada's environment commissioner revealed that, despite a punishing carbon tax, the Liberals will fail to achieve their own emission targets. In fact, the only time emissions went down under the current government was when the entire economy was shut down. It is all pain and no gain under the NDP-Liberal government.

The truth is finally exposed. The carbon tax was never an environmental plan. It was always just a tax plan. After eight years of environmental failure, the Prime Minister is definitely not worth the cost.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for all Canadians, Remembrance Day is a day to pause and reflect. As the member of Parliament for Whitby, I want to take this opportunity to pay my respects to the veterans of Whitby.

This Saturday my wife and I look forward to attending the ceremonies hosted by branches 112 and 152 of the Royal Canadian Legion and The Court at Brooklin retirement home.

Oral Questions

From Vimy Ridge to Juno Beach and various UN peacekeeping missions, all over this country, we remember the courage and sacrifice of the many men and women who fought to preserve what we too often take for granted: our values, our institutions, our freedom and our democracy.

We wear this poppy as a small way to thank the members of our armed forces, past and present. We will forever be indebted to veterans for their courage, their duty, their honour and their selflessness.

Lest we forget.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Montreal's Jewish community is being targeted.

[English]

This week alone, here is what has happened: a Montreal synagogue has been firebombed, a hate preacher has called for the extermination of Jews, Jewish students have been called the K-word, terrorists have fired bullets at two different schools and the U.K. foreign office has warned of likely terrorist attacks in Canada.

We have all seen the Prime Minister's theatrical words, but what concrete steps has he taken this week to protect Jews and all Canadians?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we unequivocally condemn the attempted firebombing and the shooting at two Jewish schools overnight last night in Montreal. There is no room and there is no place for anti-Semitism in Canada. There is no room and there is no place for hate. There is no room and there is no place for violence.

We condemn this unequivocally. We stand with Jewish Canadians across the country. The SPVM in Montreal is investigating, and we will continue to monitor this situation, call for calm and ensure that Canadians are safe.

* * *

• (1420)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, fine words will not protect people. We need real action.

The scandal surrounding the Prime Minister's \$1-billion green fund is only getting worse. Not only did whistle-blowers compare this fund to the sponsorship scandal, but the chair of the fund also directed \$200,000 in taxpayers' money to her own company.

Why did the Prime Minister not fire that chair?

[English]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me bring some facts into the Leader of the Opposition's fairy tale. From the moment I learned about an allegation of wrongdoing, I demanded a third party investigation. After receiving the report, we demanded that there be corrective action at the management level and at the board level.

We expect the highest level of governance from any entity that has received money from the Government of Canada.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister and the Prime Minister have known for six months about the scandal brewing at their green slush fund. It is a billion-dollar fund that one of its own public servants compared to the sponsorship scandal, saying there was money for nothing. Yesterday, Canadians learned that the chair of the fund directed 200,000 tax dollars to her own company. The minister has known for six months.

Why has the Liberal chair not been fired from the job?

[Translation]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I would like to provide some facts about his story. As soon as we heard about the allegations regarding the management of funds at that agency, I called for an external investigation to get to the bottom of the matter. Based on the results that we obtained, I asked for corrective action to be taken.

We expect the highest level of governance from all agencies that receive funding from taxpayers. We will continue to get to the bottom of this situation.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, not only is the Prime Minister not worth the cost, but he also still does not have a climate plan. He said that if Canadians paid his carbon tax, it would save the world, but here are the facts: Canada now ranks 58th out of 63 in climate action; Canada is the only G7 country not to have reduced its emissions below 1990 levels; the Prime Minister has missed seven of eight of his targets over the last decade; and, finally, according to a bombshell report by his own environment commissioner this week, he will not hit his 2030 Paris accord targets.

Oral Questions

Why will the Prime Minister not just admit that he does not have a climate plan; he has a tax plan?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition is saying in the House is factually incorrect.

The facts are as follows: We have had the best performance in greenhouse gas reductions since 2019. We have a plan that has been applauded by environmental organizations, research organizations and municipalities. Even the oil companies have applauded our climate plan.

This morning, at the environment committee, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development said that not only is pollution pricing working, but it is responsible for 30% of the emissions reduced in Canada since 2019.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is funny that the minister keeps focusing on 2019 and the year that followed. That year was the only year in which emissions went down, because the economy was locked down. In every other one of the eight years the Prime Minister has been in power, he has missed his emissions targets.

He now ranks 58th out of 63 nations. He leads the only country in the G7 that has not reduced its emissions below 1990 levels, and his own environment commissioner said that he will not hit his Paris targets.

Will the Liberals finally admit that, after eight years, this carbon tax is all pain and no gain?

• (1425)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, what the Leader of the Opposition is saying is still factually incorrect. We have not missed any of our targets. The only target we have is for 2030.

Canada has missed many targets because, for 10 years, the Conservative Party did nothing to fight climate change. It did nothing to support clean energy. It did nothing to support the electrification of transportation. It did nothing on adaptation. That is why Canada has been missing our targets.

With the current government and Prime Minister, we will meet our targets. We are at 85% of our 2030 target already.

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[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICE AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, premiers François Legault and Doug Ford released a public statement calling for an open competition to replace the Aurora aircraft. That is all they are asking for, an open competition. The Liberals need to end their policies that are hurting Quebec and the aerospace industry. They have no business offering \$9 billion without a bidding process to Boeing instead of Bombardier. They have no business giving Quebecers' money to the Americans without a competition. Liberal policies are harmful for Quebec, period.

When will the Liberals launch a competition?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for taking the time to ask that very important question.

This gives me an opportunity to say how important the aerospace industry is in Quebec and across the country. It contributes nearly \$25 billion to the GDP every year and provides more than 200,000 aerospace jobs across the country, including, obviously, at every supplier in the huge supply chain. That is why we have the opportunity to continue to support it, and we will have the opportunity to continue to do so over the coming years.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bombardier is not asking for charity; it simply wants to be allowed to compete. Even that is too much for the Liberals. For the oil companies out west or the auto industry in Ontario, the Liberals are there. For Quebec and the aerospace industry, they are there too, but only to get in the way. They generously hand out taxpayer money to the Americans, to keep Americans working, but not Quebecers.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry is a Quebecer. When will he stand up for Quebec, bang his fist on the table and launch a competition?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for pointing out the amazing work that the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry and all the other ministers from Quebec accomplish for Quebecers every day. One example that I am sure he knows about is the Davie shipyard, which is very close to my riding. In March 2023, it became part of Canada's new national shipbuilding strategy, all because of the effective leadership of Liberal members from Quebec over the past few years.

* * *

LABOUR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is a good day for Canadian workers. The NDP has achieved a historic result. Anti-scab legislation that will give workers more power to demand better wages and working conditions has been introduced in the House. We used our leverage in Parliament to deliver legislation that the Liberals have always refused to introduce in the past. From now on, there will be a true balance of power at the bargaining table so that labour disputes, like the one at the Port of Québec, do not drag on.

Will the minister commit to working with us to pass this bill as quickly as possible?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is indeed a historic day for workers right across this country. Workers in this country have been looking for replacement worker ban legislation for generations, and today we delivered; we tabled the legislation. It was done properly. It was done in great spirit and with a great deal of work and co-operation with the hon. member and many members of his team. I think we have come forward, and I present to the House a simple but historic and meaningful piece of legislation for workers right across this country.

* * *

● (1430)

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is anti-scab legislation thanks to the NDP.

Now, Loblaws and Walmart have rejected the government's voluntary code of conduct on grocery pricing. That is 40% of the Canadian market, which means that the government's voluntary plan has failed.

Conservatives have never raised the issue of food price gouging, but Liberals have a choice, thanks to the NDP. Will they stand up against food price gouging that hurts so many Canadian families? Will they adopt the NDP bill to lower food prices now?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did even more than that. For the first time in Canada's history, we called all the CEOs to come to Ottawa to tell them one thing. We expressed the frustration of 40 million Canadians, and we expect everyone to do their part, including signing the grocery code of conduct to help stabilize prices in Canada.

However, there is one thing that the members on the other side can do to help Canadians, which is to vote for Bill C-56 so we can reform competition and ensure that we have more competition in this country. Why will they not act?

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*[Translation]***CARBON PRICING**

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the costly Bloc-Liberal coalition's plan for the environment is a tax plan, not a climate plan. That is why the Liberals' recent partnership with the Bloc Québécois is very bad news for all Canadians. The Bloc Québécois wants to radically increase the tax, and the Liberals are getting on board.

Even with that, the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development says Canada will not meet the 2030 target, despite their repeated assertions over the past eight years.

Does anyone in this government have the honour and dignity to admit that this is a tax plan, not an environmental one?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and dignity to

stand behind the promises we made to Canadians in the last election.

We promised to continue putting a price on pollution. That is what we are doing. The Conservative Party made the same promise, but now it is renegeing. We promised to institute a clean fuel standard. That is what we did. The Conservative Party made the same promise, but now it is renegeing.

I do not see why Canadians should believe anything the Conservative Party says. It cannot be trusted on the environment, it cannot be trusted on the economy, and it cannot be trusted on affordability.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, please do not take this personally, but I am going to address the Minister of Environment directly.

The Minister of Environment spent his entire career defending the environment. Despite that, this is the minister who, just a few days ago, agreed to grant an exception to the Liberal carbon tax.

Would the minister who speaks of honour and dignity please stand up with honour and dignity and proudly say that he is happy about the carbon tax carve-out?

This is proof positive that it is a tax plan, not an environmental plan.

The Speaker: All members know that all questions and answers must go through the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to reply to my hon. colleague, through you, that I am proud to be part of a government that not only believes in climate change, but that has been fighting to put measures in place for eight years. It is working. We have gone from a more than 12% increase in greenhouse gases to 8% below 2005 levels. I am certainly not thanking the Conservative Party, because it did not do anything for 10 years.

Our plan is working. We are 85% of the way to meeting our 2030 targets. I agree with the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development that there is still work to be done. That is why Canadians must continue to support us so that we can make progress in the fight against climate change and not let the Conservatives take us back to the Stone Age.

*Oral Questions***CARBON PRICING**

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Liberal government's record on climate change is in. The opening sentence of the Environment Commissioner's report says it all: "The federal government is not on track to meet the 2030 target".

It is now clear that the government's environment plan is a mish-mash of regulations and taxes that are not working. It is clear not just to the commission; it was clear also to COP27, where Canada was ranked 58 out of 63 countries for climate change performance.

Change starts with acknowledging failure. Will the government?

• (1435)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it quite ironic that the member campaigned for the leadership of his party on a carbon taxing platform. Now, all of a sudden, it does not work and he does not believe in it.

This morning, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development was at the environment committee. He said that pollution pricing not only is working, but it is also responsible for up to 30% of emissions reduced in Canada since 2019.

The Conservatives do not want to talk about climate change, because they do not want to talk about the fact that they are buddying up with their friends in the big oil companies. God forbid that we would do anything to affect their profits.

We want to fight climate change, and we want to help Canadians in the process.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I campaigned on a revenue-negative carbon tax. The Liberal government's environmental plan is revenue-positive, with a mishmash of taxes and regulations that are dragging the Canadian economy down.

Emissions still have not risen to prepandemic highs. That is because the economy still has not recovered. Per capita GDP and productivity are lower this year than in 2017.

After eight years, will the Liberal government admit that its environmental plan is not working and that its economic plan is not working, with productivity and per capita GDP lower today than six years ago?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. I am surprised that not only do they not have a climate plan, but they do not even have an economic plan. Their only plan is to cut services, cut investments and cut programs in Canada.

I have a piece of good news: Today the OECD ranked Canada third in the world for foreign investment attraction. Our plan is working. We are creating prosperity. We are creating jobs, and we are building Canada in the 21st century.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they can huff and they can puff, but their carbon tax house is falling down because it was built on two pillars that have completely collapsed. The first is that it is revenue-neutral, but the Prime Minister's own budget watchdog has said that Canadians pay far more in the tax than anything they hope to receive. The second is that it would allow the government to hit its own emissions targets, but the Liberal-appointed Environment Commissioner confirmed this week that the government has no hope of hitting its targets, even with the carbon tax.

After eight years of failure, will the Prime Minister put his ego aside and admit he has a tax plan, not an environment plan?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are getting there. We are 85% of the way to meeting—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. minister, from the top, please.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, we are getting there. We are 85% of the way to meeting our 2030 targets.

Do members know what is worse than not even trying? It is not even being willing to admit that climate change exists. Last week, the Leader of the Opposition was asked in a scrum, right over there, whether he would meet the Paris targets. He was like a deer in front of headlights. He could not even answer the question. He would not even answer the question.

On this side of the House, we are doing everything we can to achieve our 2030 targets, as opposed to the Conservative Party that wants to bring us back to the Stone Age.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, his own government has admitted that it is not going to hit those targets. The Liberals are getting there? Does somebody have a participation trophy we could send across the way? Maybe they would get there faster if they stopped saying no to clean energy projects, like when they killed a tidal electricity project in Atlantic Canada that would have created zero-emissions power for Canadians, when they say no to nuclear or when they say no to carbon capture. There were 18 LNG terminals on the books when the Prime Minister took office. Zero have been completed.

Oral Questions

Instead of cancelling clean energy projects, why do the Liberals not cancel their carbon tax?

• (1440)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as is too frequently the case in the House, the member is just factually wrong.

At the end of the day, the previous Conservative government got almost nothing built, including zero LNG facilities, because it gutted the environmental assessment process. It paid no heed to environmental impacts and did not have a climate plan.

At the end of the day, we have put in place measures to ensure that we are going to see good projects go ahead, including offshore wind in Atlantic Canada, battery manufacturing plants in Bécancour, the Volkswagen electric vehicle plant, Air Products' hydrogen plant and a whole range of other things.

We have to have a climate plan if we want to have an economic plan. The Conservatives have neither.

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[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, the Bloc Québécois unveiled its expectations for the economic update on November 21. We presented seven responsible but urgent demands.

With winter approaching, we need an emergency homelessness fund. We need a \$50-million emergency fund for the media. We need the repayment deadline for the Canada emergency business account loans to be extended by a year while maintaining access to the forgivable portion.

The minister no doubt realizes that the key word is “emergency”. Will she include these urgent measures in the economic update?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that my colleague is so enthusiastic about the fall economic update.

I want to point out that Canada's economic fundamentals are strong, and we are delivering results for Canadians and Quebecers. A million more Canadians and Quebecers are employed than before the pandemic. The IMF predicts that we are going to have the best economy of the G7 in 2024. We will continue to build housing, we will continue to build an economy that works for everyone, and we will unveil our plan on November 21 when the Minister of Finance delivers her fall economic statement.

The Speaker: Before continuing, I would just like to encourage members to stay seated until I recognize them.

The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind members that being responsible in the current economic context does not mean austerity. It means investing wisely.

To address the housing crisis, the Bloc Québécois is proposing funding for more than 100,000 housing units that could be ready as

of next July. To help seniors deal with inflation, we are calling on the government to increase the old age pension for all seniors aged 65 and over. To fight climate change, we are calling for an end to fossil fuel subsidies in favour of a green shift. That is what it means to be responsible.

Will the government include our responsible proposals in its economic update?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that my hon. colleague is so excited about the upcoming fall economic statement, which will be presented shortly, on November 21.

We are making responsible, forward-looking investments, such as the investment in Bécancour and investments in Air Products in Edmonton. We are making investments from coast to coast to coast, to build a green economy for the future, one that will put people to work from coast to coast to coast. We will have more information on our plan, on the debt and on our investments on November 21, with the fall economic statement.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the economic update, being responsible starts with helping 220,000 small and medium-sized business avoid bankruptcy. The deadline for repaying CEBA loans must be extended by a year while maintaining access to the forgivable portion. That is all our businesses want: a little flexibility.

I sincerely hope the Minister of Finance is listening right now. Forty SMEs in her own riding have told the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that they are on the verge of bankruptcy. What message will her economic update send to those 40 businesses in her riding? Will she help them or turn her back on them?

• (1445)

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can reassure my colleagues that we are here for small businesses.

We have already given small businesses an extra year to access the forgivable part of the loan. They asked for more help, so we gave them more flexibility to refinance, more time to access loan forgiveness and a one-year extension of the repayment deadline.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, the Prime Minister's own environment commissioner has confirmed that he will not meet his targets. He missed 88% of it. Worse, the Liberals have missed targets in seven out of the eight years they have been in power. The only year they hit the target was when the economy was shut down for COVID. Still, they insist on punishing Canadians with their carbon tax chaos.

Why are those Liberals burying their heads in the sand and pretending like the carbon tax is working when Canadians know it is not?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would invite my colleague to actually watch the proceedings from the environment committee this morning where the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development said that not only was carbon pricing working, but it was responsible for 30% of the emissions we have seen in Canada since we took office.

Nothing would have happened under the Conservative Party. It has no plan to fight climate change. It has no plan to develop the economy. It has no plan for renewable energy, for clean electricity, for electrification of transportation. That is why Canada is lagging so far behind other countries. We are playing catch-up, but thanks to all our efforts, we are getting there, no thanks to the Conservative Party.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody believes the Liberals any more. They lean on a tax that punishes Canadians and will not meet their own targets. They say no to carbon capture and storage. The environment minister himself opposes nuclear.

The Liberals have delayed approvals to 25 years to mine the minerals we need to get cleaner power. They are tax collectors in 58th place out of 63 countries on climate change.

Will the Liberals save us the sanctimony, stop killing clean energy projects and cancel their failed and now selectively applied carbon tax?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before in the House, people may be entitled to their opinions but they are not entitled to their own facts.

The commissioner this morning actually said that it was effective and it was working, and so do all of the academics. I do not know where that person gets her facts, but at the end of the day, the facts are the facts.

The fact is that those folks do not have a plan for climate change, but they also do not have a plan for the economy. In fact, right now, in the natural resources committee, the Conservatives are blocking moving forward with Bill C-49, which is about enabling the development of an offshore wind and hydrogen program in Atlantic Canada, something that is supported by the Conservative Premier of Nova Scotia and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is bizarre.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, eight years times zero targets met is still zero. After eight years of that zero government, Canadians know that its environmental record is nothing but hot air and hypocrisy.

The Bay of Fundy can supply green tidal energy to all of Nova Scotia and make us a net exporter of green energy. The only successful project to harness the power of the Bay of Fundy, delivering

Oral Questions

endless green energy, was killed by those Liberals when they refused to renew the permit. They killed capital investment in tidal power.

Why does the Prime Minister claim to support green energy but veto green tidal projects?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Do you know what is the height of hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker? It is a member of Parliament who was elected on a campaign platform that included a price on pollution and who now disavows that every day in the House. It is an Atlantic Canadian member of Parliament who is actively opposing the development of a major offshore wind and hydrogen project in Nova Scotia in direct opposition to the Conservative premier of his province. That is the height of hypocrisy.

* * *

● (1450)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when women were invited into all military operations in 1989 and submarine services in 2001, they entered an environment not made for them. Trailblazers, these women endured through discrimination and lack of support, and the physical and mental outcomes they dealt with were not documented. Now, as veterans, they are often underserved because of the lack of documentation.

When will the government honour servicewomen and make it right?

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to listen to the stories of women veterans and for our government to ensure we are addressing their needs.

While the work of the parliamentary committee is independent, it is doing a study on this very task. It is undertaking this important study on women veterans. We commit to acting on this. We urge all parliamentarians to put aside any partisan politics in order to take the time to listen to those women and hear what they have to say so we can make their lives a lot better in the future.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, UN agencies have reported that over 10,000 Palestinian civilians have been killed and 1.5 million have been displaced by the Israeli siege and bombardment on Gaza since October 7. UN experts say that these attacks constitute war crimes of collective punishment and ethnic cleansing.

Oral Questions

Shamefully, the Prime Minister directed his ambassador to abstain from a vote on an immediate ceasefire in Gaza at the UN General Assembly. Yesterday, the Liberals and Conservatives voted against our motion calling for the same.

How many Palestinian deaths will be enough for the Prime Minister to find the moral courage to call for a ceasefire?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the price of justice cannot be the continued suffering of all Palestinian civilians. What is unfolding in Gaza is a human tragedy. We must be guided by human dignity. All civilians, Israeli and Palestinian, are equal and must be protected, and international law must be respected.

Canada stands firmly with the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in their right to live in peace, security, with dignity and without fear. We will continue to support diplomatic discussions on humanitarian pauses. We need Canadians to leave, hostages to be released and humanitarian aid to get in.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last June, the Conservative member for New Brunswick Southwest attended a meeting in England held by the International Democracy Union and paid for by the Danube Institute, a right-wing Hungarian think-tank that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to ask the member to get to the point, if this relates to government business or committee chair business.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, it is a right-wing Hungarian think-tank that just last month published a paper quoting that “the stakes of the Russia-Ukraine war are not Ukraine's sovereignty, but the victory of NATO, the expansion of the US “deep state”, “wokeism”.” Coincidentally, for weeks, Conservative MPs have been blocking the modernized trade agreement with Ukraine.

Could the minister explain why this agreement is so important for Ukraine—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Members know that I have made it clear on a couple of occasions over the last few days, and this week, that we will be looking at the issue raised by all House leaders, with the exception of one, of the importance of having questions that deal with the administration of government or committee chairs. I have not ruled on this yet.

For this week, I have been letting these questions go. If there is a minister who is going to respond, I will allow it to be consistent, but I would ask all members to please try to refrain from this until the Speaker has made his ruling.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a high-standard trade agreement that is good for Canadian and

Ukrainian businesses. It is also a strong endorsement of Ukraine's territorial and economic sovereignty as it fights for democracy.

We are going to continue to stand with our businesses, including our SMEs and exporters, that want to be a part of rebuilding Ukraine, even as the Conservatives try to stall this legislation and dismiss it as woke. The Conservatives are standing in the very way of progress for Ukraine and, frankly, they should be ashamed.

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● (1455)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, the Prime Minister has not hit a single emissions target. In fact, Canada is ranked 58 out of 63 countries when it comes to climate action performance.

It is clear that the only green plan the Prime Minister has is diverting green backs from his carbon tax to his Liberal friends. However, when our most important allies, Germany and Japan, come to Canada for help, for clean Canadian LNG, he turns his back.

Why does the Prime Minister support diverting Canadian tax dollars to a billion dollar green slush fund instead of unleashing the clean Canadian energy the world desperately needs?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' reckless and risky inaction with respect to climate change has gone global. The Conservatives do not have a plan for Canada. They will not commit to the Paris targets. Now they are blocking a trade deal with Ukraine that has the most comprehensive and ambitious environment chapter in a free trade agreement by Canada.

If Ukraine can fight Russia and prioritize fighting climate change at the same time, so can we, and we are.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is clearly misleading Canadians. The Liberals do not have an environment plan. What they have is a political agenda.

The Prime Minister has two carbon taxes that are punishing Canadian families, which we now know do not reduce emissions. However, when his polls plummet in Atlantic Canada, he can remove the carbon tax from home heating oil, the energy source with the highest emissions. At the same time, the Liberal environment minister, under a wave of red tape, kills a tidal energy project that would have provided clean electricity for the east coast.

Oral Questions

Why is the Prime Minister killing clean Canadian energy, while his carbon taxes force Canadians to freeze in the dark?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is incredibly ironic to hear a Conservative member of Parliament talk about the lack of an environmental plan. We went through 10 years under Prime Minister Harper when there was no regard for the environment and there was no climate plan. We were seen as the dinosaur in the international community because of the lack of any action.

This government has put in place a comprehensive climate plan, a robust environmental plan to protect biodiversity in the country, and an economic plan that acknowledges the reality of climate change and is creating good jobs and economic opportunity in every province and territory in the country.

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[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of environmental failure, the costly Bloc-Liberal coalition is not worth the environmental cost. The carbon tax, which the Bloc Québécois wants to drastically increase, is not an environmental plan. It is a plan to tax Canadians, and it has not helped this Liberal government achieve its environmental goals for seven out of the eight years it has been in power. In fact, Canada trails behind, ranking 58th out of 63 countries.

In light of these repeated failures, will the Prime Minister finally admit that what he has is a tax plan, a political plan, not an environmental plan?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct my colleague. What he said is inaccurate. Carbon pricing works, and the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development confirmed it this morning at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. I invite my colleague to take a look at the transcript of that meeting. Not only does carbon pricing work, it is responsible for 30% of emissions reductions. That is the equivalent of taking 11 million vehicles off our roads.

Our plan is working. We are on track to meet our targets. There is still work to be done, but it is certainly not the Conservative Party that will get us there.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, a quarter of Canadians are using assistance services to meet their basic needs, such as food and housing. After eight years of this tax plan, this Prime Minister is not worth the environmental cost. The Liberals have literally killed every clean energy project. The Prime Minister killed GNL Québec's natural gas project in Saguenay. We have a Minister of Environment and Climate Change who is against nuclear energy, which does not produce any greenhouse gas emissions. The government is against carbon capture and storage.

When will the government stop killing clean energy projects and cancel its carbon taxes, which only punish Canadians?

• (1500)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sadly, what my colleague is saying in the House is again false. Since we took office, wind power production in Canada has increased by 60%. The GM, Stellantis, Volkswagen and Northvolt projects are all projects that the Conservative Party opposes. They also oppose battery manufacturing in Quebec and the investments in Ontario.

We are here to create a sustainable economy for generations of Canadians while fighting climate change, unlike the Conservatives, who have no plan for the economy, no plan for fighting climate change, and no plan for affordability.

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NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the next few weeks, the government is going to release its economic update. I think this would be a great opportunity for the government to express its concerns over the future of the news media. Our media industry is struggling. Our print media, electronic media, local media and regional media are struggling. Frankly, I think they need a break. Bill C-18 will not take effect in the short term. Meanwhile, some newspapers will close.

Will the Minister of Finance announce the creation of an emergency media fund until Bill C-18 comes into force?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are obviously very concerned about what is happening in the media sector. That is why we have been putting programs in place for a number of years to provide better support to print media and media in general. We have also worked hard to modernize our laws and ensure that the web giants, our cultural industry, our creators and our journalists operate within a fairer environment.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives have opposed all of our efforts. I have no idea why they are in the pocket of the web giants instead of siding with Canadian businesses and Canadian workers.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, honestly, I think the media and culture sector has had it with people laying blame left and right. It is time for the government to step up. When I talk to people in media and culture, they agree that the Liberals have nothing to be proud of right now. People need concrete action, and they need it right away. Our newspapers, radio stations and television stations need help now. We saw what happened at TVA last week, and we know that the same thing will happen to other media outlets. Either the government does nothing and our media industry fades away, or it takes action immediately and finds long-term solutions.

Oral Questions

Will the government set up an emergency fund, or will it sit idly by while the crisis buffets our media industry?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has never sat idly by. We have set up programs, and I remain open to any idea or solution that could help the sector. That is something the Conservatives never did. They never sided with cultural workers. They have been against them every step of the way, and we are seeing the consequences of that now. We have been unable to modify the regulatory framework for the audiovisual sector for three years now. This is costing jobs, and that is their fault.

We will see the Conservatives' true colours when the anti-scab bill is tabled. Will they side with workers and the people, or will they once again be in the pocket of big corporations and wealthy Canadians?

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, Liberal insiders, officials and members behave like the law does not apply to them. They mislead committee, threaten co-workers and funnel taxpayer money through ghost contractors and even through their own companies. The \$54 million on the arrive scam app is only the tip of the iceberg. Now the RCMP is investigating corruption with the NDP-Liberal government. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Canadians have had enough of this blatant misuse of taxpayer money. Is it finally enough for the Prime Minister?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said time and time again, we expect all contracts to be issued following the law and procurement regulations. Any actions of misconduct will come with consequences.

We look forward to the report and the investigations that are ongoing, but once again, our expectations are that contracts are fulfilled and issued following the law.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has been in power for eight years, and there is a profound dissonance between those alleged expectations and what they have been delivering and doing these eight long years.

Arrive scam hearings have been explosive. This week, senior government officials accused each other of lying because the Liberal minister wanted someone else's head on a plate.

This government is destroying trust in our public servants, and the Prime Minister is clearly not worth the cost. Instead of trying to blame others, why will the Prime Minister not take responsibility for his arrive scam disaster and commit to co-operating with the RCMP investigation?

• (1505)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the Conservatives trying to attack instead of focusing on the facts. The fact is that any allegations of misconduct will come with consequences.

We welcome the investigations that are ongoing. The CBSA has put in place measures addressing these procurement issues, and we expect all contracts to be fulfilled following the law.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as if losing \$173 million to Medicago, which up and left the country at the beginning of the year without warning, was not bad enough, we now learn that the Public Health Agency of Canada has lost another \$150 million to this company. This means the agency burned through a total of \$323 million, money that vanished into thin air.

My question is for the member for Québec, who has been here for eight years. Not only is he responsible for this file, but this happened in his riding. At that time, he was Minister of Health; today, he is Minister of Public Services and Procurement. Where is that money and what is he going to do to get it back?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic was a really difficult time. It was impossible to imagine that there would ever be a vaccine available for the entire population. At that point, the government made sure to make a choice that took into account every legitimate option. As a result, our response to the pandemic was one of the best in the world. The vaccine was available to all Canadians. We are really proud of that.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all sympathize with the additional challenges that people with disabilities face when they travel, particularly by plane.

Recently, we have seen media reports of several cases involving the unacceptable treatment of people with disabilities who were travelling by plane, specifically with Air Canada.

The Minister of Transport called a meeting with Air Canada to hear about its detailed accessibility plan. Can he share the highlights with us?

Oral Questions

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent work. This morning, I had a very productive meeting with my colleague, the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, and representatives from Air Canada, including the CEO, Michael Rousseau.

We told them that what happened is unacceptable and that we wanted to know what they intend to do to remedy the situation. Air Canada committed to investing in specialized equipment and training and to improving boarding and disembarking processes. We told them that we would see them again in December to find out what they have accomplished.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's hand-picked chair of his billion-dollar green slush fund says that she followed all conflict of interest rules, but we learned at committee yesterday that she was the one who moved a motion that funnelled hundreds of thousands of dollars to her company, which she then took a \$120,000 payday from. After eight years, it sure pays to be an insider with the NDP-Liberal government, and it is clear to see that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

Canadians want to know if the NDP is going to support Conservatives in their calls for more hearings on this scandal, and they want to know who else got rich.

The Speaker: I do not see a minister rising to answer this question, which was directed to the fourth party in the House.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

• (1510)

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising they will not get up to tell us who got rich. The question was obviously for the minister, and if he is too afraid to tell Canadians which of their insiders are getting paid, we learned yesterday from the hand-picked chair that she got \$120,000 after moving a motion to get \$200,000 paid directly to her company. Millions of taxpayer dollars are being funnelled to ineligible companies through corruption and conflicts of interest at this very minute.

The minister's officials said that heads would roll and people would be fired; they lost confidence in the board. They found out it was a political problem and decided they would not fire anyone. The Auditor General is investigating, so should Parliament. We want to know who got rich.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer any and all questions the member has.

Let me bring facts to the story. By the way, this organization existed for 10 years during the Harper government. Let us bring some facts to the table. One thing Canadians at home should know is that the moment allegations were brought to my attention, we launched a third party investigation. On the basis of that report, we took im-

mediate action to restore governance at the organization. We will not shy away from taking any and all actions needed to make sure there is proper governance at the institution.

The Speaker: Colleagues, when the Speaker recognizes a person to ask or answer a question, there is an expectation, which as a matter of fact is in the regulations, that all members are not to speak until that person is finished speaking.

I ask the member for South Shore—St. Margarets, who had a question today, to please be respectful so that all members can listen to the members asking or answering questions.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, the list of conflicts of interest is growing at the speed of light.

A federal green fund paid \$217,000 to the firm owned by the chair of the board of Sustainable Development Technology Canada. That she could approve public funding from a federal foundation for her own company points to a clear conflict of interest.

Will the Prime Minister continue dragging his feet before firing the board of directors? This is yet another Liberal scandal.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think he will be able to use that clip because that corporation existed for 10 years under the Harper government. Just think, 10 years under the Harper government.

On this side of the House, what did we do? As soon as we were made aware of the allegations, we asked an external firm to investigate them. When we received the report, we asked that corrective measures be taken. We expect the highest level of governance from every agency that receives funding from the Government of Canada. We will get to the bottom of this.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, replacement workers distract from the bargaining table for long disputes and can poison workplaces for years after. The best deals are made at the bargaining table, and our economy depends on employers and unions staying at the table to reach the best, most resilient deals. That is why in 2021, our Liberal team committed to banning the use of replacement workers.

Oral Questions

Today marks a historic milestone. Could the minister advise this House how we are delivering on this commitment?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were glad to work with the NDP on this piece of legislation. It fulfills a promise that we made on page 22 of our platform in 2021. It is very much in keeping with the spirit of tripartism, which this country is built on, where business, unions and government work together on major issues that affect this country.

May I say it is richer and better for having worked with the NDP on this legislation. I look forward to continued debate by members in this House.

* * *

● (1515)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are abandoning caregivers again. They promised to make the Canada caregiver credit refundable, yet people are still waiting. We are in an affordability crisis. Unpaid carers are struggling to keep up with the cost of living. Meanwhile, the Liberals are missing in action. Caregivers deserve better.

Will the Liberals finally live up to their promise and immediately deliver the refundable tax credit?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure my colleagues.

The Canada Revenue Agency does have a tax credit for caregivers. We are doing everything in our power to promote this tax credit and to ensure that people are well informed. We use tax clinics with our volunteers to promote this program and serve the people who need it most.

* * *

[*English*]**OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned when I got a chance to speak to the House on another occasion that I wanted to run around and hug everyone. I have not reached all of my colleagues yet, but I am very happy to be back.

My question for the hon. Minister of Environment, who may not be so happy to see me back, is based on the report from the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. The report says clearly, “The 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan is insufficient to meet the 2030 emission reduction target”, to which I add that the 2030 emissions reduction target is too weak to meet our global share of responsibility for the Paris Agreement goals of holding to 1.5°C and as far below 2°C as possible. However, the commissioner did say there is barely enough time to do more to meet the weak target.

Will the government cancel the TMX pipeline, ban fracking and put in place an excess profits tax on the oil and gas industry?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see my colleague in the House.

I agree with the findings of the commissioner. We need to do more. Our plan shows that we are at 34%, towards a 40% emissions reduction target. Since the environment commissioner did the study, we have put up a number of new measures to help fight climate change and accelerate the reduction of climate pollution, including a zero-emission vehicle mandate and new methane regulations. By the end of the year, as the Prime Minister announced in New York, we will also have a framework to cap the emissions of the oil and gas sector.

* * *

[*Translation*]**BERNARD LEMAIRE**

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House salutes Bernard Lemaire's immense contribution to the development of the Quebec business community and the green economy in Quebec, Canada and around the world, and offer its condolences to his family and loved ones.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

● (1520)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Before members leave, I would like to rise in this place to make a correction. I mistakenly said that it was a standing order in the House that members had to sit in their place and be quiet while others are speaking. It is not a standing order of the House; it is actually just a long-time tradition of the House and one by which members authorize the Speaker to maintain order and decorum. Therefore, I would like to apologize to all members for making that error.

Government Orders

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we all return to our respective ridings to mark Remembrance Day and honour the men and women who proudly fought and died to defend our country, I have a few questions for the government House leader about the work that awaits us.

I especially hope that she will have an answer for the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, who asked us forcefully and adamantly during question period today precisely when Bill C-56 would finally be passed. I refer the question back to the government House leader since this bill has not been called in the House since October 5. Can the government House leader tell us when she intends to call Bill C-56?

It will certainly not be tomorrow or next week, since the House will not be sitting. Could she tell us what business awaits us when we return from our constituency week?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. I hope that his interest in this bill means that the Conservative Party has changed its position and is finally supporting it. Even though we have not yet received that confirmation, perhaps the Conservatives finally want to help Canadians with housing and competition. We hope to see the Conservatives reverse course soon.

[English]

Next week, of course, is a constituency week, when MPs will be able to connect with their constituents and have a chance to join them at Remembrance Day ceremonies over the coming weekend.

Our priorities when we come back will be Bill C-57, with respect to the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement; Bill S-9, with respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act; and Bill C-52, to enact the air transportation accountability act. I would hope that, instead of playing dilatory parliamentary games, the Conservatives would allow for debate to happen on those bills, but I guess we will see when we come back.

Last, on Tuesday, November 21, at 4 p.m., the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will deliver the fall economic statement.

* * *

ECONOMIC STATEMENT

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 21, 2023, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings to permit the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to make a statement followed by a period of up to 10 minutes for questions and comments; after the statement, a member from each recognized opposition party, and a member of the Green Party, may reply for a period approximately equivalent to the time taken by the minister's statement and each statement shall be followed by a period of 10 minutes for questions and comments; after each member has replied, or when no Member rises to speak, whichever comes first, the House shall adjourn to the next sitting day.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. government House leader's moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

**NATIONAL SECURITY REVIEW OF INVESTMENTS
MODERNIZATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-34, An Act to amend the Investment Canada Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to stand in this place and debate the important issues faced by Canadians, specifically, those good people who sent me here from the beautiful constituency of Battle River—Crowfoot in east-central Alberta.

If I could, since this is the last sitting day prior to Remembrance Day, I would like to quickly reference a couple of things. I hope I have the latitude to do so.

Today, I met with Harold and Mike, who are members of Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada. It was an interesting meeting, where I had the opportunity to hear from these two distinguished retired servicemen about how they are not considered to have fought in a war in their time in service to our country. I wanted to acknowledge this specifically here today; an appropriate commemoration, truly, would be to ensure that those who served in our country's armed forces, especially during times of conflict, are acknowledged accordingly. I wanted to acknowledge that before I get into the substance on Bill C-34, because I do not think I will have a chance to do so otherwise before Remembrance Day. Of course, all of us in this place honour the sacrifice made by so many.

We join into debate here on Bill C-34, which is a bill of seven parts that addresses a host of issues in relation to amendments to the Investment Canada Act. In particular, I would like to highlight a few things today.

I listened with great interest this morning, and to previous debates, and I have participated in previous discussions related to the bill. I wanted to ensure that aspects of this are—

• (1525)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the hon. member going to be sharing his time?

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Government Orders

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, yes, I was going to get there, so I appreciate that.

I will take this opportunity to let the table know that I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the new and very capable member from Manitoba, the member for Portage—Lisgar. He came in with big shoes to fill, maybe not big in size, but big shoes to fill in terms of his predecessor, the Hon. Candice Bergen. I look forward to splitting my time with him.

Getting back to the substance of Bill C-34, we have before us a bill that addresses aspects of what has become an increasingly problematic circumstance globally at a time when there are specific demands associated with the global investment climate that have put many of our supply chains at risk.

Of course, we saw the practical workings of this during COVID, with respect to supply chains and things that many Canadians took for granted. We always expected to be able to see things like toilet paper on grocery store shelves, yet we saw during COVID that the supply chain system and the numerous aspects of that were challenged. There were pressures that resulted in things like grocery store shelves being empty.

We saw things like a shortage of microchips. This meant there was a shortage of a whole host of things that many people would not have associated with microchips, from vehicle manufacturing to other things.

This has a specific relevance to Bill C-34. When it comes to foreign investment, we have to ensure that, as a nation, as a G7 country, we get it right in all aspects of how we permit, specifically, state-owned enterprises in the larger context of foreign investment happening in our country. I do not think anybody in the House would argue that there certainly is investment needed and that Canada should be a destination to invest, a destination for capital. We have seen that over the course of our history.

Certainly, I look back to the time when Stephen Harper was prime minister. The predictable business environment that existed within this country was one that was envied around the world. We saw in the midst of incredibly challenging global economic circumstances that Canada was a beacon of hope and predictability, where people could invest and see some certainty.

Over the course of the challenges that we have seen over the last number of years, whether that be in relation to the COVID pandemic, whether that be in relation to the host of concerns surrounding supply chains, the fact is that over the last decade or so, there has been a radical shift in the geopolitical objectives of certain state players around the world.

I would notably say that the People's Republic of China would be at the top of that list, although it is not limited to it. Certainly, its objectives have changed the global investment climate dramatically.

I have heard a lot of members from the party opposite criticize the past record. I believe it was the parliamentary secretary from Winnipeg who referenced that the Harper government had done some preliminary work on CETA. I am proud that it was Conservatives that negotiated the deal. The Liberals almost screwed it up,

but they were able to, with support from Conservatives, actually get that across the finish line.

Over the last decade, there have been radical shifts that have taken place. Of course, that has to be addressed in our legislative frameworks governing some of these things. We need to ensure that they are responsive to that.

We have seen over the last number of years, specifically the last eight years that this Prime Minister has been in power, an erosion of trust, as I have talked about often. This includes the investment climate in our country.

We are dealing with significant advancements in things like technology. We are seeing a demand for things like critical minerals. We are seeing food supply chains being put at risk. We are seeing the need to ensure that we have tight parameters and an understanding, so that not only does this protect Canadians first and foremost, but that it also ensures there is that investment certainty in our country, including for folks here at home investing.

Quite often when we talk about things like investment, it gets lost on many folks who are not trading stocks on a regular basis or not staying in tune with the financial markets. They may see a headline that the TSX is up or down, or something like that.

● (1530)

The reason this has such particular relevance is that every single Canadian is, in fact, an investor. If one has ever paid into a pension fund, whether that be the CPP or otherwise, that individual is an investor. We need to ensure that we have that predictable investment climate.

Specifically, we were disappointed at committee that the Liberals were not more responsive to some of the very practical amendments the Conservatives brought forward on this bill. Those amendments would have ensured that a threshold, for example, to trigger a national security review was reduced so that for Canadian resources, including intellectual property, there was a safer and more secure environment. It would ensure that those things could not fall into the wrong hands, as we have seen, unfortunately, has been the case over the last number of years.

In fact, if one could believe it, there were 10 amendments that the Conservatives brought forward. They were practical things, things that we heard from testimony at committee that would have helped address some of what we believe are ways the bill could have been improved.

As I come down to the last minute or so of my speech, we have a need in this country to ensure that our investment climate responds to the demands of a modern supply chain. We need to ensure that we have everything that is required, whether it be the critical minerals that are so essential for the manufacturing of things like our cellphones, or whether it be a host of other things that go into the economy of today, and the economy that is being built for tomorrow. It is absolutely essential that we get this right.

I would make this point in terms of the larger conversation and not just in relation to Bill C-34. We have to take seriously the national security implications when it comes to foreign investment in Canada, and not only when it comes to big multinational mergers and whatnot, which may make headlines.

We heard at committee, and we have heard throughout the course of debate, that there is a host of peripheral discussions that are required when it comes to strategic investments that may serve the geopolitical interests of a foreign state, some of which are hostile to our national interest. If we do not take these things seriously, we can see a diminishment of Canada being able to have a secure economy for our people, and also a secure investment environment for capital, which is so very essential.

As we continue the debate on Bill C-34, I hope we can take seriously how important this bill is, not only in terms of the issues it is purported to address, but also in terms of the host of concerns surrounding foreign investment. We have to ensure that we get it right so that Canadians can depend on a predictable environment for their capital, where Canadians can benefit on the home front most important of all.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois thinks that Bill C-34 does not go far enough in protecting our economic flagships, our head offices, and the innovative efforts of SMEs, which are being bought up by foreign entities. Often, they come up with important innovations that become profitable abroad. We do not think that enough transactions are being reviewed.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on that. Does he think that we need to do more to protect our head offices and innovative small businesses?

• (1535)

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Bloc is right. There are many examples where there are innovations. We have an incredibly innovative culture here in this country.

An example is my home region of rural Alberta, whether it comes to the oil and gas sector and the incredible innovations that make our energy sector the cleanest and greenest on the planet, which we can depend on and be proud of, or whether that is in agriculture, where we see incredible innovations.

We need to ensure there is that security so that when somebody innovates in Canada, it does not end up being stolen from them, even if it is a small investment. Sometimes it is not the billion-dollar acquisitions and mergers that will make headlines on BNN Bloomberg. Also, we heard stories of fishing ports on the Atlantic coast where there were strategic investments meant to control and take away opportunities from Canadians. We have to ensure that we get it right.

The member is right that this bill does not address all those concerns. It takes some steps, but certainly more needs to be done. It is too bad that the Liberals did not take our advice seriously and pass

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the common-sense amendments that we brought forward during the committee discussions.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague on the issue of critical minerals as I represent Timmins—James Bay, which has some of the greatest base metal and critical mineral deposits anywhere.

There is a number of issues that we need to face in Canada in terms of being able to compete in this fast-moving energy transformation. Number one is making sure that that supply chain is able to benefit our economy. We know that other international economies are desperate to get metals.

The other issue is strategic. That is about whether or not we put a lens of sustainability on, for example, metals like cobalt and lithium that are controlled by China and that are being exploited in really brutal conditions, for example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We need to actually have a supply chain that says we can do it sustainably, that we can do it with good jobs, that we can do it with investment, and that we can do it to build up a Canadian-North American economy, as opposed to simply going to the bottom line of what is happening in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with Chinese control and horrific human rights abuses.

I would like to hear what my hon. colleague has to say on that.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, do members know what is tragic about the comments that member just made?

I agree with him that we do need to ensure that we protect the critical minerals that are essential to our economy. We need to ensure that Canada is the place where we have an abundance of those things, whether it is lithium from my home province that is in what is known as produced water, a by-product of oil.

Here is the tragedy. That member is talking about cobalt, a very important part of the modern economy. It is also that member who stands against Canadian oil and gas development.

He is concerned about human rights abuses when it comes to critical minerals and the abuses associated with that production abroad, yet he and his coalition partners in the NDP want to see energy production outsourced from Canada to jurisdictions where they do not care about human rights, where they do not care about LGBT rights, where they do not care about the dignity of humanity, and they would even go as far as to fund the war machines that would kill citizens in countries like Ukraine.

It is tragic that the New Democrats are either ignorant to that reality or they simply are intentionally conflating the fact that we could be a leader when it comes to all critical minerals, all energy, yet it is because of individuals like that and the ideology of that coalition that is holding Canada back.

The Deputy Speaker: This is just a reminder to keep our questions and answers as short as possible so everyone can participate in debate.

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-34, otherwise known as the national security review of investments modernization act.

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With it being so close to Remembrance Day, I too would like to offer my appreciation for all those who have served and continue to serve, and all the families that support them. I would encourage everybody to make sure they attend a ceremony this Saturday to honour and respect veterans for all of the work they have done.

Speaking of our security, the NDP-Liberal coalition has, for far too long, not taken our national security seriously, so it is good to see some efforts being made through the legislation before us. Unfortunately, our reputation on the world stage has taken a beating over the past eight years. We have seen numerous diplomatic debacles over those years, and a Prime Minister who regularly embarrasses Canada on the world stage. It seems that every time I go on social media, another country's news broadcast is mocking the Prime Minister. It is one thing to embarrass oneself with a tickle trunk of outfits to wear to another country or by wearing blackface more times than one can remember, but the Prime Minister has forced our allied nations to lose confidence in us as a partner.

Just this past July, Dan Sullivan, a United States senator from Alaska, called out the Liberal government for consistently failing to meet NATO's 2% GDP target for defence spending. What is worse is that the Liberals are cutting \$1 billion from our defence budget this year. While the American ambassador played it nice a few weeks ago and said he is not yet worried about our failure to meet our NATO targets, we all know and can recognize how our allies feel about Canada these days. If we had been taking our national security seriously, perhaps Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States would not have separated off from the Five Eyes alliance and created their own strategic defence partnership without Canada.

With regular disruptions to our ports and railways, we are losing the perception of us as a reliable trading partner that can deliver the goods we produce here in Canada to market. With a changing climate, our adversaries see the north as an opportunity. They see a wealth of resources and future transportation routes, and we are increasingly unable to protect our own sovereignty in the north. The sad reality is that under the Liberal government, we have become a bit of a laughingstock on the world stage, and it is disappointing to admit that. However, I cannot think of a single nation around the world with which our relationship has improved over the past eight years.

Given all of the failures internationally, one would assume that perhaps we would want to take care of our domestic economic needs here at home, but we have not done that. Although we are taking a good step with this legislation, after eight years, foreign state-owned enterprises, particularly those connected with the Communist regime in China, have heightened their influence in Canada. I will provide a few examples. In 2017, the government allowed Hytera Communications, a firm with ties to China, to acquire B.C.-based satellite communications company Norsat International. In 2020, Nuctech, a company owned by the Chinese government and founded by the son of a former Chinese Communist Party secretary general, won a bid to, get this, provide security equipment to over 170 Canadian embassies around the world. Imagine that. The government was going to entrust the security of Canadians stationed abroad to technologies linked to the Chinese Communist Party.

I know there are a lot of examples like this, but I will end with one more. Just last year, the CBC revealed that in 2017, the CBSA began using radio equipment and technology from Hytera, the company I just referenced. It was quite literally using the technology at our borders while our main ally, the United States, was indicting the company for 21 espionage charges. It banned the company from operating and doing business because it posed an unnecessary risk to national security. At the same time as our border guards were using the equipment, our American counterparts and friends were kicking the company out of their country.

It seems as though often the current government is focused on political interests and not our national interests. We should not be surprised. We all remember when the Prime Minister alluded to his level of admiration for China's basic dictatorship. It is perhaps why the Liberals have given China so many passes and why they have allowed Chinese-linked companies and agencies to infiltrate our university campuses, co-opt our research and take our technologies that innovative Canadians, innovative students and innovative companies in Canada have been spearheading.

● (1540)

We could talk about all these failures all day, but I want to address specifically some pieces of Bill C-34. I was pleasantly surprised that the Liberals brought the legislation forward, because it is an important idea to try to always enhance our national security, particularly as things evolve and our competitors become our allies and our allies become our enemies in the global world.

The goal in the legislation of amending the Investment Canada Act to protect our national security is not a bad one at all, but I really thought that for once, the Liberals had come up with their own idea. However, looking back to our 2021 platform, I noticed we had pledged to do the same thing: "Canada's Conservatives will: Protect Canadian intellectual property with a strengthened Investment Canada Act". As the old proverb goes, imitation is the highest form of flattery, and there has been a lot of mimicking going on lately. My first speech in the House was just last month, about the affordable housing and groceries act, which was plagiarism, effectively, of two Conservative bills, Bill C-356 and Bill C-339. Of course we also saw, just last week, a climb-down on the carbon tax for home heating for some Canadians in some parts of the country.

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Not all mimicking is bad, but at the end of the day, as my fellow Manitoban colleague from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman said, “The Liberals are tired, they are weary and they do not have anything else to bring forward”. This seems to be the case. While I would prefer an election so we can put forward a strong platform that will include enhancements to the Investment Canada Act, among many other things, I do hope the current Liberal-NDP coalition keeps copying a few of our ideas. It can start with axing the carbon tax in its entirety, but I am not going to hold out a lot of hope.

Overall, Bill C-34 needs to go further. It does not go far enough to address the risks faced by Canadians. By and large, the largest threat we have to investments here in critical services is by state-owned or state-connected enterprises from authoritarian regimes like China and Russia. Canadians are rightly concerned about this problem. Foreign direct investment is a good thing. We should want to draw investment dollars into our communities. However, we should also want to maintain our sovereignty and our national interests. The reality is that we have become a place where people do not want to do business. Investments in our natural resource sectors, among many others, are flooding out. Our counterpart, the United States, which does not have a carbon tax, is more appealing to do business with. Companies would rather go just south of the border, south of my riding, and set up business there.

The bill does not include the ability for the government to create a list of authoritarian countries that are prohibited from owning Canadian companies or assets, which I think it should do. The Conservative team, at the committee stage, did a great job of bringing forward common-sense recommendations for changes to the legislation. Not as many were adopted as should have been, but Conservatives did work hard to fix some of the flaws.

One last issue that is becoming increasingly important and visible, particularly in my area in the Prairies, is the increased buying of farmland by Chinese-linked companies and organizations. Not only does this threaten our long-term food security but it also significantly increases prices for young farmers who are trying to enter an already very difficult industry to get into. It is important that we enable the Investment Canada Act to be broad enough and flexible enough to have cabinet be able to make important decisions on whether a takeover or change in ownership is in the best interest of Canadians. This seems like common sense to me. We know it is something only Conservatives can provide.

● (1545)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ontarians are very familiar with the Conservative slogan “common sense”, because the former premier Mike Harris, when he brought along common sense, ended up with unsafe drinking water and a countless number of problems based on his common-sense revolution. Therefore, it is pretty clear where the common sense from Conservatives is.

I want to go back to the member's comment, specifically when he said that \$1 billion was being cut from the defence budget. His implication was that this was going to affect the CAF. No member of the Canadian Armed Forces is going to be affected by this. As a matter of fact, what is going to be affected by what is being talked about by the minister is reducing the number of outside contracts and the number of third party agreements that the government has.

Ironically enough, the member then went on to criticize this later in his speech.

Would the member agree with me that, at least as it relates to government business, finding savings in terms of less contracting out, which is what that \$1 billion is about, is a good thing?

● (1550)

Mr. Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, what a weird time it is to cut \$1 billion. I am all for finding efficiencies in government, and after the last eight years of absurd inflationary spending, we absolutely can find billions of dollars to cut. I find it interesting that we are finding cost savings by going to a third party consulting company and paying it \$660 million to give us advice on how we can best stop spending money on consultants.

It is important, at the end of the day, that when my colleague criticizes common sense and links it to the Mike Harris days in Ontario, my constituents, my friends and my neighbours have common sense. They know it when they see it, and they know they do not see it in the current Liberal government.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on taking a seat in the House.

One of the things that the member spoke about today was the idea that over the last eight years, Canada has become diminished on the world stage. I would say that while it is true that Canada is diminished on the world stage, it is not something that happened just in the last eight years. In fact, the cuts that we saw to official development assistance under the Harper government were directly responsible for Canada's not being able to get a security seat when we tried for that seat. The cuts by the Harper government and the failure of the Liberal government to reverse those cuts were a huge part of that, as the continent of Africa saw that we had stepped back from participating in a meaningful way with it.

The member also spoke about the need to not invest in China because of the human rights abuses that we are seeing in China and with China being a belligerent on the world stage. I wonder whether the member has any comments to make about the fact that we have a new Indo-Pacific strategy and that India, under the Modi government, has shown itself to be belligerent and not to be following human rights as well. Therefore, are we not taking our eggs from one basket that is not adhering to our beliefs as Canadians for human rights, and putting them into another basket where human rights are also not being protected?

Mr. Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for the well-wishes.

I will start by saying that there has been a shift over the past eight years. We had a previous prime minister who was strong and principled on the world stage. I think back to the moment when he told Putin to get out of Ukraine the first time that he invaded. That is the Canada I want to be a part of. I want to have a strong foreign policy vision for our nation.

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In terms of India and China, the member is right: Our best strategy is diversification. We are an export nation. We are a natural resources-based nation. We are a trading nation, and it is something we should be proud of. A pan-American agreement is a good approach. At the end of the day, we need to make sure we are doing things in the best interest of Canadian companies and of Canadians themselves.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is the first chance I have had to address the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar since his win in the by-election. I would like to congratulate him. I look forward to working with him in this place, as I did with his predecessor.

In terms of the piece of legislation before us, I am very concerned that we apply a new lens to foreign investment in Canada, from a national security point of view and from a national sovereignty point of view. We have had the recent experience, which I have mentioned in this place, of something that did not ring any bells or raise any flags as it began, which is a company called Paper Excellence. It is owned by one billionaire from Indonesia who has now bought up the majority of the pulp and paper sector of our economy: Resolute Forest Products, Catalyst paper and Domtar. How do we track that? What triggers an investigation when we start seeing the Canadian economy bought up and held in countries like Indonesia where we do not at this point have a relationship that would let us track that?

• (1555)

Mr. Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, that was a very good question. The fact is, it took eight years. That is too long. We do need to act and to make sure we have the flexibility to look at evolving national interest issues and track them better so we can be more flexible and responsive in identifying problematic investors.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be splitting my time with the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

It is always an honour to bring the voices of Chatham-Kent—Leamington into this chamber. Today, I look forward to addressing the third reading of Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act, with the aim of protecting Canada's national security. That is the important part.

After eight years of the Prime Minister, numerous foreign state-owned enterprises have acquired interest and control in many Canadian companies, intellectual property, intangible assets and the data of our citizens. As usual, the government has done too little, too late, to fully protect our national economic and security interests.

While Conservatives are pleased that four of our amendments were passed at committee, we are a bit bewildered as to why the Liberal-NDP government would want to water this legislation down. It defeated 10 amendments that would have made Canadian interests more fully protected by having better legislation. Why?

One of the amendments defeated at committee would have modified the definition of a state-owned enterprise to include any company or entity headquartered in an authoritarian state, and of course, one of the main ones there is China.

The House of Commons Special Committee on Canada-China Relations presented an interim report to the last May that was entitled "A Threat to Canadian Sovereignty: National Security Dimensions of the Canada–People's Republic of China Relationship". This report offered an in-depth review of the national security implications related to the PRC's actions. It addressed key national security topics, including the safeguarding of Canadians from foreign interference, preventing threats to Canada's democratic institutions and elections, defending intellectual property and research, enhancing cybersecurity, combatting organized crime and money laundering, addressing global health governance threats and scrutinizing the PRC's intentions in the Arctic. This report should serve as a warning. We need to align ourselves with our allies.

The U.S. has created a committee on foreign investment in the United States, or CFIUS, which is an inter-agency committee authorized to review certain transactions involving foreign investment in the U.S. and certain real estate transactions by foreign persons, to determine the effect of such transactions on the national security of the U.S.

Have we not learned our lessons, through COVID, by allowing critical elements of our economy to be put under foreign control? A recent CBC article said, "Casey Babb, an international fellow with the Glazer Centre for Israel-China Policy and an instructor at Carleton University in Ottawa, said China uses foreign investment as a strategic tool."

I am going to quote him from the article: "They use foreign investment as a door, as an entry point, to gain access to markets, to gain access to government, to investors as well".

He goes on to say, "It's a great way to sort of use licit means to carry out illicit, or even legal but injurious, activities." Dr. Babb also said that "China is looking to tap into [Canada's] natural resources, including oil, critical minerals and fish."

The government's "soft on China" policy must end. One of the amendments it refused to pass sought to list specific sectors necessary to preserve Canada's national security, rather than using a systematic approach.

Let me provide a personal example of a sector-specific area. On our own farm in Leamington, in the years prior to the Ukraine-Russian war, we actually used more Belarusian potash on the farm than our own Canadian Saskatchewan potash. Why? Sea freight is relatively cheaper than rail freight. Why is our rail freight so expensive? Because it is being tied up hauling crude oil to eastern refineries, rather than having that oil flow through an energy east pipeline, which is lowering our rail capacity for moving potash and other goods that cannot move by pipeline. Supply and demand drives up the cost of freight.

In addition, 660,000 to 680,000 tonnes of nitrogen fertilizer, mainly urea, were imported pre-war into eastern and central Canada. Why is western natural gas not flowing through a pipeline to fertilizer manufacturing plants here in eastern Canada? Again, Russia's invasion of Ukraine should teach us a lesson. Where we have critical inputs in Canada, we should ensure that we have the infrastructure that could be used domestically so that we would have competitive prices vis-à-vis foreign options.

● (1600)

Another Conservative amendment that failed to pass would have exempted non-Canadian Five Eyes intelligence state-owned enterprises from this national security review process to prevent an overly broad review process. This, unfortunately, sends all the wrong signals to our Five Eyes partners with whom the Liberal government's policies have been at odds.

Canada needs to be seen as a reliable player in this partnership. Under the current government, this has not been the case. Canada needs to restore its trustworthy reputation with the U.K., the U.S., Australia and New Zealand so that critical intelligence information gathered by one member can be confidently shared with other members.

Again, the failure of this amendment to pass sends all the wrong signals to our allies.

Amendment 25.4(1.1) would have allowed the Government of Canada to maintain ownership of intangible assets that have been developed in whole or in part by taxpayer funding. An example of an intangible asset, which I learned in preparation for this speech, is a radio frequency filtering system for our Mounties. What is that? It is a filter circuit made up of capacitors, inductors and resistors that is used to filter the signal frequency in communication channels.

What is behind this? Let us think back to 2017 when the China-based Hytera acquired a telecom company from B.C. called Norsat. This company has significant Chinese government ownership, but it does not make any money. Does that not send a signal that this should be looked at? This company significantly lost money for six years.

We rightfully called for a full national security review, but the industry minister refused, and he approved the Chinese acquisition that provided the RCMP with telecom equipment. Incredibly, the federal procurement department awarded a \$550,000 contract to Ontario-based Sinclair Technologies to build and maintain the radio frequency filtering system for the Mounties. By the way, Sinclair Technologies is the parent company of Norsat International.

In 2022, Norsat was charged with 21 counts of espionage in the U.S., and President Biden banned it from the U.S. Just eight months later, the RCMP awarded China's Hytera subsidiary, Norsat, the contract to install telecom hardware in our RCMP communications systems.

When questioned at committee, the RCMP was asked if it knew whether Hytera was charged and banned from the U.S., and the answer was “no”. How can the Liberal government continue to let such enormous security breaches happen?

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We all know how important lithium is for our economy. It is needed to make the batteries for our EV vehicles. In 2019, the Liberals approved the sale of Canada's only lithium-producing mine to the China state-controlled Sinomine Resource.

Every ounce of lithium mined in Canada right now goes to China, while Canadians are unable to supply lithium to our own growing electric vehicle industry, which is putting our nation in a potentially vulnerable situation.

Again, in 2019, Conservatives demanded a full national security review. The “soft on China” Liberals ignored it. I guess this would explain why the NDP-Liberal coalition voted down amendment 25.3(1), which would have allowed the minister to go back and review past state-owned acquisitions through the national security review process, which would have allowed a more fulsome review.

Last week, the Prime Minister did show us that the Liberal government can go back, as it adjusted the carbon tax on home heating fuel in Atlantic Canada and in rural Canada. The government demonstrated it can reverse course after identifying a mistake. That, of course, was in response to polling, not in the interests of national security.

It is time for a common-sense government, a government that would allow our nation to prosper while at the same time protecting its citizens. Conservatives will continue to use our voices to ensure that both the prosperity and the protection of our citizens is defended.

● (1605)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like to know what he thinks about something specific. Earlier, I asked a question about whether enough is being done to protect our head offices. The member told me that he agreed with me but that there must be balance in all things. What we want to do locally—

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, I think there is a problem with the interpretation. We will wait for that to be sorted out.

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 Saanich—Gulf Islands, Emergency Preparedness; the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, Sport.

● (1610)

The problem with the interpretation has been fixed. The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé may continue.

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Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I will start from the beginning. I was thanking my colleague for his speech and telling him that a little earlier, I had mentioned that the Bloc Québécois members feel that this bill does not go far enough in protecting head offices.

However, as in everything, there needs to be balance, reasonable measures. We cannot shut down all outside investment. Several MPs have reiterated today that there needs to be outside investment as well. It is a question of striking the right balance. How do we implement good measures that preserve jobs, to try and maintain our technological innovation, but without blocking all outside investment?

I would like my colleague to share his thoughts with us. Where do we find the balance to be able to export, too, at some point?

[English]

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague. We do want the investment here. Actually, some of the amendments proposed were going in the direction of allowing a less rigorous process for our Five Eyes allies, who have better processes in place than we have right now, to have reciprocity in the approval process. In addition, one of the amendments targeted only authoritarian states, which tend not to be our allies. There was differentiation, if we look at all the amendments, that allowed for a differential process depending on where a potential investment was coming from.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is a new member, as am I, of the international development caucus, and I enjoy working with him very much on that work.

I have a couple of things. First of all, he talked about the need for Canada to play a bigger role in the world so that our allies share intelligence with us. However, I cannot help but point out that the leader of his party, who is hoping to be the prime minister of this country, refuses to get top security clearance and in fact would not be able to benefit from their intelligence in any way.

The other thing he spoke about was the need for us to invest in energy infrastructure. My friend, the member for Timmins—James Bay, and I were in Germany meeting with the Chancellor and the head of the chancellery at this time last year, and they spoke to us about the need to translate their energy sources. They wanted their energy sources to become green. They were not interested in a long-term investment in fossil fuels. They wanted to get off fossil fuels, so building the infrastructure for fossil fuels that, in fact, the rest of the world is already moving away from does not seem like a very smart strategy.

I am wondering if he could comment on that.

• (1615)

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague and I both have a passion for addressing hunger. There are eight billion people in the world. Four million of them are dependent on synthetic nitrogen fertilizers made through the Haber-Bosch process from natural gas.

If we had the pipeline that I referenced in my speech to eastern Canada, in the short term, we could have addressed the needs of our allies Germany and Japan, which have come calling for LNG.

There will continue to be a need for infrastructure dealing particularly with natural gas.

We could also do far better in addressing the world's expanding use of coal with LNG. That would do more than any carbon tax ever will, as the record of it is showing, in reducing world greenhouse gas emissions. It was predicted 10 years ago that we would reach peak coal. We set a record in coal consumption in the world last year. We are predicted to smash that record this year. Why are we not putting Canadian LNG on the world market? It is because we do not have the infrastructure to deliver it to our allies and to some of the countries still putting coal-fired plants online.

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that after eight years of the government's policies, the OECD put out a report that says Canada will have the worst performing economy in terms of business investment out of the entire industrialized world this decade and for the next two subsequent decades as a result.

I am wondering if the member could comment on this piece of legislation and the fact that the 10 amendments proposed by the Conservatives that were voted down by the NDP-Liberal coalition could have perhaps been part of a remedy to that situation.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. If the member wants to know more, I can add to that.

There are so many places where Canada could be leading, and we are not because we have not made the investments in our infrastructure. That needs some discerning. This legislation is a step in the right direction, but it does not do nearly enough to allow us to screen potentially helpful foreign investment to get the infrastructure we need to serve our allies, and it does not do enough to protect our mineral assets and other critical assets for advancing our economy here at home and abroad.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this House as a representative of the amazing people and spectacular region of North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Before I speak to Bill C-34, I would like to acknowledge that this is Veterans Week. I also acknowledge the recent loss of a dedicated community volunteer, constituent and friend, Steve McInnis, a 37-year veteran with the Canadian Armed Forces, where he served with distinction. In 1988, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to UN peacekeepers, and Steve received this fitting recognition for his service in the cause for peace in the Sinai peninsula from 1977 to 1978. Steve served his country and community proudly and with distinction and will be deeply missed. I am confident Steve has reconnected with his long-time friend and fellow veteran Paul Shannon for beers, laughter and, of course, their famous shenanigans.

I say to Steve, Paul and indeed all veterans and Canadian Forces families that Canada appreciates their sacrifices and we will never forget.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act. The proposals of this bill seek to amend the Investment Canada Act's governance of acquisitions of Canadian companies by foreign entities. After eight years of Liberal inaction, this bill is long overdue. I will provide some examples of how overdue it is.

In 2017, six and a half years ago, red flags were raised and alarm bells sounded about the takeover of B.C. seniors homes by profiteers in Beijing. I will quote one of my Conservative colleagues at the time, the former MP for Kamloops—Thompson—Caribou, Cathy McLeod, who stated:

Our seniors are concerned about the quality of care, of food, and the credentials of the people caring for them. This transaction is clearly not about charity; it is about profit. Why would the Prime Minister put the care of our parents and grandparents at the mercy of profiteers pulling strings from Beijing?

The Liberals' response to Ms. McLeod's concern was dismissive and short-sighted. As the industry minister at the time, Navdeep Bains, said, "the additional financial resources will allow Cedar Tree the ability to expand, provide better service, and create more jobs."

Despite the Liberal reassurances back then, services for B.C. seniors were neither expanded nor improved. To the sad contrary, services became worse. It was B.C. senior citizens who suffered when multiple Beijing-controlled senior care homes failed to achieve standards of care for some of our most vulnerable citizens. The Liberals ignored warnings from the Conservatives, and the result was a Beijing-controlled disaster that caused suffering for seniors in British Columbia, suffering the Liberal government was warned of, suffering it ignored and suffering it enabled. That was the first example of how the government's hesitance and delay in protecting Canada have hurt Canadians.

As another example of how overdue this bill is, I will reference a 2019 report from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled "West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits". The fisheries committee undertook this study in response to very serious concerns raised by Canadian fish harvesters and coastal communities who had seen their access to Canada's fisheries eroded by increasing levels of foreign control.

The committee's study was in response to alarm bells warning us about very significant portions of Canada's west coast fisheries being bought and owned by foreign buyers. Alarms were raised by Canadian fishers who were and continue to be very concerned about the loss of control of not only a valuable Canadian food source to foreign entities, but a source of culture, economics and well-being for our coastal communities. The Liberal government should have acted sooner in response to the testimony we heard during that study, which pleaded for the government to protect Canada's interests from foreign interests. One witness testified:

- (1620)

As for overseas investment, besides a few large companies, this is very hard to trace, but there are examples. For instance, you may have heard of the recent scandal with money laundering through gambling and real estate in B.C. We traced one company that has been investing in groundfish and now owns 5.9 million pounds of

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quota. The director of this company is the same overseas investor named in newspaper articles on money laundering through casinos and real estate in Vancouver.

This testimony was provided to Parliament over four years ago. What is even more troubling is that even though that report was tabled in this House back in May 2019, the same fisheries committee was recently provided an update on the Liberal government's progress in addressing foreign takeovers. That update exposed that the government has failed to prioritize and take actions required to prevent foreign ownership and the control of Canadian fisheries resources that Canadians and Canadian communities depend on.

One key recommendation from that 2019 report stated:

That based on the principle that fish in Canadian waters are a resource for Canadians (i.e. common property), no future sales of fishing quota and/or licences be to non-Canadian beneficial owners based on the consideration of issues of legal authority, and international agreement/trade impacts.

When the committee received an update on the Liberal government's response to that report recommendation, we learned that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans still had no way of knowing who owns what when it comes to west coast fishing licences and quota. The Liberals put out a botched survey to try to find out, but little else has been done to address the issue.

These are just two examples of how the Prime Minister and his government cannot be trusted to do what is right for Canadians' interests. I will say, though, that there are members of this House who can be trusted to provide improvements to legislation, even such as this bill, which was flawed as originally drafted. I would like to recognize and thank my colleague, the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets, for the work that he and other Conservative members of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology have done on Bill C-34 to strengthen it and hopefully deliver some much-needed and overdue protections to Canadians.

At the committee stage, the member for South Shore—St. Margarets recognized the flaws in this bill and, by working with the other opposition parties, was able to get significant amendments passed to strengthen the bill and protect Canadians' interests. Some of those amendments included, number one, that for any state-owned enterprise from a country that does not have a bilateral trade relationship with Canada, the threshold for review by the Government of Canada would be zero dollars, and number two, that any transaction over zero dollars would be reviewed, compared to the threshold now, which is \$512 million.

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Chinese government-controlled and other foreign entities are buying a lot of assets through sales of under \$512 million now, without review. The new threshold, should this bill pass, would be zero dollars to trigger a review. The same would apply for a new concept that was added, which is that all asset sales would need to be included in the test with a state-owned enterprise so that an investment to acquire, in whole or in part, the assets of an entity could be subject to a review.

As I close today in the final minutes of debate before we all return home to our communities to take part in Remembrance Day ceremonies, on behalf of my family and all the residents of North Okanagan—Shuswap, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the brave members of our Canadian Armed Forces for their service, and express this gratitude to Canada's veterans, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, and to their families. We will never forget.

• (1625)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap brought up the example of the long-term care homes that have been so problematic in our valley and in our province of British Columbia. The company Anbang, through Cedar Tree and others, perpetuated a situation of very poor care for our seniors: mothers, fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers. The NDP put forward an amendment to make it such that, if a foreign government took over a company after a foreign company had been cleared, as was the case with Anbang Insurance, Canada should act. When the NDP amendment was put forward for this bill, the government members said we could already do that.

Could the member comment on that and whether the government should take immediate steps to take over the company that is taking care of our seniors, since we really do not trust it to do that?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay is correct. We need to do everything we can to ensure the safety and well-being of our senior citizens, especially those who are in care homes and do not have families to support them.

With respect to the technicalities of exactly what the current government can and cannot do, I would not want to be quoted on that. I believe it is a bit more of a legal decision. However, I agree with the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay: We need to ensure that there are measures in place to protect against foreign overtake of Canadian companies that serve our citizens. We must make sure that they are well protected.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague. I understand that the review itself has not been updated in a number of years. This is highly significant considering the scope and the likelihood of foreign interference, as we witnessed with China and others.

I have a concern. Our goal is not only economic prosperity, but also to keep our resources as our private preserve. What is missing

in this bill that could cause a company to shut down if not for foreign investment? What should the government propose to maintain prosperity and hold on to our natural and human resources? Is this bill missing something?

[*English*]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, we are seeing that, after the inflationary spending of the current government, many businesses are struggling to survive. With the high interest rates that have been created, we are concerned about how many businesses may not be able to do so. However, to quickly sell them off to a foreign entity, which is really just looking to buy up businesses for pennies on the dollar, is not the answer. There should be a way for Canadians to invest in Canadian companies to make sure that those businesses are viable and can continue.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the words of the member of Parliament for North Okanagan—Shuswap, as well as his leadership, particularly when it comes to the fight against aquatic invasive species.

Conservatives know that, if Canada is going to compete for foreign direct investment, we need to have three things right: We need proper investment rules, a competitive tax environment and environmental processes to get big projects done. Right now, the government has struck out on all three.

Conservatives wanted to actually extend an amendment that would allow for our Five Eyes partners, which share not only our values in terms of democracy and legal processes but also our market-based approach. That would have relieved at least one of the three important points that I raised earlier on how to attract direct investment.

What does the member think about the current government's approach when it comes to these three points: taxes, investment rules and environmental processes?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for the question and for his support on something that I am passionate about, the prevention of aquatic invasive species into the Okanagan, Shuswap or any waters in B.C.

On the three points the member mentioned, the current government has certainly failed. We are seeing taxes at higher levels than they have been in years. Inflation is incredibly high. The investment attitude in Canada is not good. We need a common-sense Conservative government that will re-attract business to Canada and allow businesses to profit and prosper.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his recognition of veterans as we approach Remembrance Day.

I want to express my sympathy to the family of Norm Zimmerman, a local resident and World War II veteran. In 1943, he joined the RCAF. I want to express my condolences on behalf of a grateful nation to his son Bruce and to his family.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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

• (1635)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Monday, November 20, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m. so we can begin Private Members' Business.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP) moved that Bill C-332, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (controlling or coercive conduct), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to be here to debate my private member's bill on coercive and controlling behaviour. I first want to start by acknowledging all of the work that so many advocates and survivors have done to make this bill a possibility.

Coercive and controlling behaviour is a form of domestic violence, and it touches the lives of so many people, especially women. Without the advocacy of partners like Andrea Silverstone from Sagesse Domestic Violence Prevention Society, Alliance MH2, Carmen Gill and so many others, this bill would not be possible today.

I also want to thank my colleague, the MP for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, for his work on criminalizing coercive and controlling behaviour. In the previous Parliament, my colleague presented a similar bill to mine which was supported by domestic violence prevention groups across the country. I am grateful for his allyship on this topic, and I am also incredibly grateful for his mentorship over the years.

In the spring of 2020, Canadians stayed home to slow the spread of COVID-19 in their communities. People from all walks of life worked together to take care of each other. However, at the same

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time, there was another epidemic taking place. The rates of intimate partner violence were skyrocketing. Since the start of the pandemic, calls to the police regarding domestic violence have risen by 50%.

Coercive and controlling behaviour is a form of domestic violence. Rather than a single instance, coercive control is a repeated pattern of behaviour from the perpetrator. While certain individual behaviours may seem normal if considered individually, when taken all together, they can amount to coercive control.

This pattern sometimes includes sexual and physical violence, but in many instances it starts with other tactics, such as threats, humiliation and depriving the person of independence. Often that means preventing them from accessing their support network, limiting transportation and communication, taking their car keys, breaking their cellphones, and limiting access to bank accounts, passports and immigration documents.

However, it can also look like controlling what food they eat, or not allowing them to wear certain clothes, denying them access to social media, and a number of other examples of what a partner can do to control another. Coercive control is one of the most common precursors to physical violence. In fact, 95% of victims of physical abuse also report coercive control.

In April 2020, as people stayed home to stop the spread of COVID-19, we also woke to the shocking news of a mass shooting in Nova Scotia. The shooting left 22 people dead. It was a national tragedy.

The public inquiry that followed found that the shooter had a history of gender-based violence, including coercive and controlling behaviour. When his long-time girlfriend tried to leave the relationship, he locked her out of their house, removed the tires from her car and threw them in the ditch in an attempt to prevent her from leaving.

Years later, on the night of the shooting, he attacked and forcibly restrained her. Luckily, she was able to escape, surviving by hiding in the woods overnight. She was able to give critical information to police as they conducted the manhunt.

This example of coercive and controlling behaviour is one that is now very public and well known, but often these red flags are ignored. Even when the victim, their community or police want to intervene, there are no tools in our justice system to support victims of coercive control.

The first time I recognized coercive control was when my sister showed up at my doorstep in tears. Her partner had taken her cellphone and bank cards. He had taken her car keys too, but she luckily had another set. It was the first time but definitely not the last time. Over the next few years, like so many other stories of intimate partner violence, coercive and controlling behaviour eventually escalated to physical violence. I remember being scared for her life.

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It takes an average of seven attempts for a woman to leave an abusive partner, and I am so thankful that my sister is now free from that relationship. She gave me permission to share her story, even though when women disclose these stories, it always comes with risk.

• (1640)

She took this courageous step because, if there had been more awareness about the examples we have raised of coercive control when she was experiencing it, it might not have taken so long to leave. She wants women and girls to know that these behaviours are not acceptable and to have the tools to get out.

These stories are all too common. I urge my colleagues, especially my male colleagues, to talk to the women in their lives. Statistically speaking, we all know someone who has been in an abusive relationship. There is a very strong chance that, in that relationship, they experienced coercive control at the hands of their abuser.

Because coercive control is not only serious on its own account, but also a precursor to physical violence, we have an opportunity to intervene before people become physically injured. It is also one of the most common risk factors for femicide. Even in cases where there were no instances of physical violence before the murder, coercive control is almost always present.

Passing this legislation would give victims and police the tools they need to prevent some of the most heinous examples of intimate-partner violence. In Canada, every six days, a woman is killed from intimate-partner violence. It is time we said that enough is enough.

Despite years of calls and recommendations to criminalize coercive control, the Liberals have not acted. For a government that claims to be a champion for women, a champion for protecting women, it continues to delay and disappoint. It is time to take action to support victims, as 25% of calls to 911 are connected to intimate-partner violence. Domestic abuse is pervasive. It not only has horrific impacts on individuals and families. It also costs the economy \$7 billion each year.

The cost of domestic abuse is highest for women. Coercive control impacts women at a ratio of five to one. The trauma of domestic abuse and intimate partner violence is long-lasting. One study shows that children who witness violence in the home have twice the rate of mental health disorders.

Two years ago, the justice committee tabled recommendations to Parliament calling on the government to pass legislation. My NDP colleague, the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, spearheaded the report on coercive control. I also want to thank MPs from all parties for their work on the justice committee in listening to survivors and listening to frontline organizations.

I thank my Bloc colleague, the member for Rivière-du-Nord, my Conservative colleagues, the member for South Surrey—White Rock and the member for Fundy Royal, my Liberal colleague, the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills, and so many more on the justice committee for their work and for calling on the government to take action.

It has been two years and, two years later, we are still waiting. Other countries have moved forward, including the U.K. with its controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship offence in the Serious Crime Act. Since this bill was passed in 2015, the U.K. has experienced a 30% increase in people reaching out for support. For the first time, many victims of coercive control now know that they can call domestic violence shelters or police for help.

We have also seen conviction rates rise in the U.K. as judges and police become more aware of the reality of coercive control. I want to touch briefly on the additions I have made to the bill from that of my colleague, the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke. One small change was that we added people who are engaged to be married explicitly into the bill, to ensure that those who are engaged but not explicitly dating would be covered. The more critical addition was the inclusion of people who are in partnerships that have ended.

We know that the time period when a woman is leaving an abusive relationship is the time when she is at most risk for violence and femicide. It is critical that we include separated partners in the bill so that victims and police have the tools they need to protect the person as they leave.

Criminalizing coercive control means giving victims and survivors additional tools to leave abusive situations. We have a responsibility to give these victims more control, more autonomy and more power to escape dangerous situations, hopefully to prevent the all too common escalation to violence.

• (1645)

There is no way of knowing whether the April 2020 shooting could have been prevented by criminalizing coercive and controlling behaviour, but my hope is that we can support victims and prevent further violence. I am urging my colleagues from every political party to support this bill to protect women and to protect victims of intimate partner violence.

I want to thank everyone who has had a hand in crafting this bill, especially the survivors, the frontline organizations and my colleague, the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, for his tireless efforts. Again, I urge members in the House to support the bill.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Victoria for her work on this very important legislation.

Private Members' Business

The member mentioned that other jurisdictions have already implemented similar legislation. What we have heard from those jurisdictions is that, while the legislation is good, the implementation has had some difficulty because members of the justice system did not always know how to implement the new law. I would ask whether she has any suggestions on how to mitigate those problems.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her support for this move and for recognizing the importance of this bill.

I really appreciate that question because we have heard from survivors and domestic abuse organizations in the U.K. and Scotland about some of the barriers that people face, even after the legislation has passed, which is why it is so important that we ensure that judges, prosecutors and people involved in the criminal justice system have training.

In Canada, we already know that coercive and controlling behaviour is integrated into family law. It does have a place in some of our criminal justice systems, so some people are aware of it, but many are not. We need to do the work to make sure that judges, prosecutors and people in the criminal justice system are educated.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to follow up on the question my Liberal colleague asked my colleague from Victoria, I would like to say that several administrations around the world have indeed stated that this type of legislation can be complicated to enforce. That being said, at noon today, the members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women welcomed a delegation from Europe which included people from France. I had some exchanges with some French government members, who said that despite the complexity, countries are moving forward when it comes to coercive control. We have to find a way to address this issue while trying to avoid the traps of the complexity of evidence. That is one of the barriers that remain to be crossed to truly address issues of domestic violence seriously.

It is critical to get to this because otherwise we are left with a single type of violence, the worst kind. There are many other types of violence that we must seriously include in the debate to be able to respond to the needs of as many victims as possible.

• (1650)

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her comments and for her ongoing advocacy for women and victims of intimate partner violence.

The member raises an important point. We are seeing other jurisdictions doing this work and doing it effectively. In the U.K., since 2015, when it passed the legislation, we have seen a 30% increase in calls for support. The fact that we are seeing increased convictions of instances of abuse because of this legislation really shows us a path forward that works.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her intervention in the House today. Through the work she has done on this file and

how eloquently she speaks, I have learned a great deal from her on this issue.

We have heard criticisms that domestic abuse is already covered within the criminal justice system. However, this particular piece of legislation is so important because it does take it past what the criminal system deals with, and I would like the member to address that a little more in depth. I know she addressed that during her speech, but I want to give her an opportunity to share more on that.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her ongoing support for victims of intimate partner violence. She raises a really critical issue. Many people do not know what coercive control is. It is not a simple instance of violence. We have often heard from police that, when they show up, they are not able to take action or provide support because the tools that are needed are not in our criminal justice to support victims of coercive control.

When one partner breaks the other's cellphone or takes the car keys or their bank card, it does not fall under the current domestic abuse laws in Canada. It is so critical that we acknowledge the patterns of abuse and recognize that they are so prevalent in our society, so pervasive across the board. It is heartbreaking to see this happen. It is especially heartbreaking that, when victims have the courage to come forward, so far the support has not been there.

This is an important step that New Democrats want to take. I thank all colleagues across all parties for their support.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to speak today to Bill C-332, an act to amend the Criminal Code, introduced on May 18 by the member for Victoria. This bill seeks to achieve the critically important objective of greater protection from coercive and controlling conduct in intimate partner relationships.

[Translation]

Coercive control is a pervasive, long-term form of intimate partner violence that is intended to deprive victims of their autonomy. While some behaviours may constitute criminal offences in themselves, coercive control has to do with the cumulative impact of a series of behaviours, most of which do not constitute separate criminal offences.

[English]

Coercive control is a pervasive form of intimate partner violence. It takes place over time and serves to deprive victims of their autonomy. While some types of conduct, in and of themselves, may constitute separate criminal offences, coercive control concerns the cumulative impact of a range of behaviours, most of which do not.

Private Members' Business

Before I speak to this important piece of proposed legislation, I would like to express my deep condolences and sorrow to the families, friends and communities of the victims of intimate partner violence across Canada, including recently in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; Truro, Nova Scotia; and Renfrew County, Ontario.

As someone who spent many years covering criminal court, I have graphic images and horrific details burned into my brain. They will never leave my head. I have come to know countless grieving families over the years, and they will never leave my heart.

These losses are immeasurable. Gender-based violence and intimate partner violence have no place in Canada, and each instance of these crimes is a tragedy. I echo the Minister of Justice in calling gender-based violence an epidemic in Canada that must be stopped.

We know that women are most often the victims of intimate partner violence, including coercive control, and that it is commonly perpetrated by men. In fact, 44% of Canadian women report having experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. In 2021, women and girls represented 79% of police-reported victims of intimate partner violence. Between 2011 and 2021, two-thirds of all women and girls who were victims of gender-related murder were killed by an intimate partner. These are significant and distressing figures. Clearly, more needs to be done.

Our government is committed to ending the gender-based violence epidemic. I want to thank my colleague from Victoria and my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke for their hard work on this issue.

Prior to Bill C-332, in 2020 and 2021, two private members' bills were tabled. They proposed almost identical reforms. Parliamentarians have also recently studied the issue of coercive control.

For example, the April 2021 report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights entitled "The Shadow Pandemic: Stopping Coercive and Controlling Behaviour in Intimate Relationships" recommended that the Minister of Justice engage with provincial and territorial counterparts to study the possibility of creating a new coercive control Criminal Code offence. I am pleased to note that this work is under way. Justice officials are collaborating with their provincial and territorial partners, and they are engaging stakeholders to inform that work.

Furthermore, the Ontario Renfrew County coroner's inquest recommended criminalizing coercive control, and the Minister of Justice's response to the inquest recommendations reiterated openness to criminalizing control and noted the ongoing work at the federal, provincial and territorial levels. I understand this work is also informed by the insights from the Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission's final report, which included a number of recommendations related to coercive control.

We know from parliamentarians' study and Justice Canada's engagement that there are diverse views on creating a new coercive control offence. In particular, a number of concerns have been raised, including that an offence could disproportionately negatively impact indigenous people, racialized and marginalized communities. It could also exacerbate their overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. Perpetrators of intimate partner violence may also

use a potential coercive control offence to further abuse their victims, for example, by accusing victims of committing coercive control, including to gain an advantage in family court. Victims may be charged with the offence, especially when they are defending themselves or their children.

● (1655)

The offence may be difficult for criminal justice actors to understand, enforce and prosecute because coercive control involves ongoing behaviour that serves to deprive the victim of their autonomy, which may be difficult to identify. Survivors may be revictimized by the criminal justice system when they testify.

Those who do support a coercive control offence spoke to the benefits of enacting such an offence, including that a new offence would better capture the actual experiences of victims, which concerns the impact of ongoing abusive conduct, rather than individual abusive incidents. A new offence could assist justice system actors in understanding and responding to intimate partner violence, including coercive control. A new offence could serve to prevent future violence, because coercive control often occurs prior to physical forms of violence and is a risk factor for its most serious forms, such as what is referred to as femicide. A new offence would be symbolically powerful and thus would empower victims of coercive control.

The experience of other jurisdictions may also assist us in examining this important issue. Specifically, England was the first jurisdiction to enact a coercive control offence in 2015, followed by Scotland in 2018, Ireland in 2019 and New South Wales in 2022. England's 2021 evaluation of their offence outlined a number of policy concerns, including that only a small number of incidents have come to the attention of police, indicating difficulties for both victims and police in recognizing the offence, missed opportunities for recording the offence as coercive control, and the necessity for training and specialized resources. A very high proportion of charges were withdrawn due to evidentiary difficulties, including where victims withdrew from the process, which highlights that gathering evidence in such cases is a significant challenge for police and prosecutors. Most prosecutions involved charges for other offences, for example, violent offences, which may indicate that the offence is more likely to be reported or identified by the police when another offence is committed.

• (1700)

[Translation]

Last May, Scotland published an evaluation of its coercive control offence. The conclusion was that there are no intrinsic problems with how the legislation is drafted, but there are problems with how it is enforced. One such problem is the degree to which the police are equipped to interpret and enforce the legislation.

These evaluations no doubt explain, at least in part, why stakeholders expressed support for the Scottish approach rather than the English approach. The findings of the evaluations also support an approach that would delay the coming into force of a new offence of coercive control in order to allow time to address enforcement issues, such as training.

[English]

Bill C-332, which is modelled on England's offence, proposes to criminalize repeated or continuous controlling or coercive conduct towards a spouse or other family member where that conduct has a significant impact on the person subjected to the conduct.

I am proud to support Bill C-332. However, I encourage committee members to compare the English and Scottish approaches and draw lessons that can be used to optimize Canada's path forward.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a really important bill, and it is always a true honour to stand in the House and represent the people from Peterborough—Kawartha who elected me.

I have been here for two years now, and the slowness of this place is frustrating. People are suffering, and a lot of people reach out to us, as members of Parliament, who are often in the depths or at their worst by the time they get to us. We have seen an increase in victims' rights' being eroded. Victims are really suffering, and we need change. The bill before us is a very positive movement on something that can be done, and I am very honoured to stand to speak to it.

The member for Victoria, who brought the bill forward, also shared a very personal experience as to why she created this private member's bill. It is very motivating to see that it comes from a place of humanity, to make the world a better place. Bill C-332 is an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to controlling or coercive conduct. I am going to do a little bit of housekeeping stuff, and then I will get into some personal stories about this, because I think most people, especially women members of the House, have a lot of experience or know somebody who has experienced this.

The private member's bill would amend the Criminal Code, in particular section 264, by adding the following offence:

Everyone commits an offence who repeatedly or continuously engages in controlling or coercive conduct towards a person with whom they are connected that they know or ought to know could, in all the circumstances, reasonably be expected to have a significant impact on that person and that has such an impact on that person.

Basically, the bill would be giving language to coercive control, which is relatively new in the Criminal Code. We have seen it happen in a couple of other places. In 2015, we saw it happen in England. Scotland and Ireland, I believe, were in 2019. This is the first time this has happened.

Private Members' Business

What is coercive control? Some people may actually know what this is, but they might not know the name of it. Many people would probably know it from Hollywood movies actually. *Alice, Darling* is a fairly new movie that really delves into this. From my era, people may remember the movie *Sleeping with the Enemy*, and there was a great Netflix series called *Maid*.

I am going to tell a story about my friend, what happened to her and what she had to do to get out of her relationship. I remember being on the phone with her many times, and she said, "Well, he's not hitting me, so it's not that bad." I said, "Okay, but you don't have any money in your bank account, you're not allowed to go where you want to go, you don't have your own phone and you're afraid to leave your house." That is abuse. That is where coercive control comes into this, and that is ultimately what it is. For women and men watching this, anybody who slowly takes away a person's finances, does not let them share a credit card or does not allow them to buy things on their own, and it is like a slow and steady kind of thing, that is coercive control, and the bill before us would build that into the Criminal Code to make it a criminal offence.

I talked to a couple of people before I rose to speak today, in order to get their thoughts on this, and I will share their feedback. However, before I do, I want to share what happened to my friend whom I spoke of.

My friend knew that she needed to get out of that relationship, but she could not. She could not leave him. She and her children were hostages in their own home. She had no money and no way to get out, and he would take her car keys. She could not leave. She literally had to get a burner phone. She had to stash away money that she got somewhere else. She had to leave when he went to work. It was like a Hollywood movie in real life. However, I want to tell members that today, she is doing amazing. She got her master's in education and built herself up from nothing.

• (1705)

It is possible to escape for anybody who is living in this reality. Most victims often do not even know they are victims, because it happens so slowly and the abusers make them feel like they are nothing.

Some people wrote to me with their stories, and I will share them shortly.

Private Members' Business

I asked a former prosecutor what he thought of this bill. He said that any time we can improve access to justice for victims, that is a win. Coercive control is an element of other offences, and this bill would be really helpful in preventing the often, sadly, inevitable escalation that happens in domestic violence. What is so great about the bill is that it is a prevention end, because people often cannot go to the police or do not want to go to the police until there is a physical assault. That is the slow progression of coercive control. It can start with not being allowed to wear what one wants to wear, and it progresses. This bill would help victims feel empowered to come forward.

I will read what the chief of the Peterborough Police Service wrote to me when I asked for his thoughts on this bill. The message from Chief Stu Betts is, "It would mean that there would be recognition of the fact that many crimes are only reported after a long history of coercive control and victims of those crimes may feel a greater sense of vindication and that someone recognizes that the history has caused increased harm. It also recognizes that some of those engaged in this type of behaviour essentially operate with the knowledge that their victims are likely not to report, if ever. I believe it may also go a long way toward the work we do to assist victims of crime."

There was a horrific story out of Pembroke. I do not even like to say the murderer's name because I feel it gives him the attention that he feeds off of, so I will only refer to the victims. There were three women killed, point-blank shotgun killings: 36-year-old Anastasia Kuzyk, 48-year-old Nathalie Warmerdam and Carol Culleton. They were all murdered within the space of less than an hour by a man who everybody, including the police, knew was dangerous, yet nobody could do anything.

This bill would be a very simple, tangible solution to put into the Criminal Code to help victims.

I asked folks at home if they wanted to write to me to share any experiences and contribute to my speech today. One woman wrote to me. I am not going to use her name to protect her, but she gave me permission to share her story with everyone. It is important that I read this into the record.

She said, "As a mom who's been separated four years now and someone who has gone through hell with an ex-spouse, I feel this bill will hopefully help people who go through these types of situations. I left a 13-year marriage because of emotional, verbal and psychological abuse four years ago, which took me a lot of strength and courage to do. My mental state was drastically going downhill and I knew I had to finally leave, which was the hardest decision I ever had to make. I was having unpleasant thoughts. With support and help, I managed. I thought I was breaking free and things would get better, but as you are probably aware, the post-separation abuse escalated and got worse." That is just what I spoke of. She said, "After four years, I am still dealing with coercive control and emotional and verbal abuse."

The next part is so profound. It is emotional. She said, "I would rather be punched in the face than have to go through years of emotional, verbal and psychological abuse. I have talked to the police in the past a couple of times about situations, but all they could do was talk to him and warn him. They told me there is nothing they

can do until he actually physically hurts me. The effects and damage of emotional and psychological abuse is horrible and exhausting, mentally and physically. After four years of being separated, I am still trying to find peace and build myself back up. It is very hard to do when you are still being abused, but with time and a lot of help and support, it is possible. Putting this in place would help."

Members can obviously see that Conservatives fully support this bill. It has been put forward before. The former justice minister agreed with it, but nothing was done. Victims have repeatedly taken a back seat in the last eight years under the Prime Minister. This bill solidly states that yes, we will do something; yes, we see victims; yes, we recognize the implications and dangers of coercive control.

I hope everyone in the House supports this bill.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to Bill C-332, which amends the Criminal Code to create an offence of engaging in controlling or coercive conduct that has a significant impact on the person towards whom the conduct is directed, including a fear of violence, a decline in their physical or mental health or a substantial adverse effect on their day-to-day activities.

The issue of controlling and coercive conduct has been an interest of mine for quite some time. This type of conduct includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, financial control, and implicit or explicit threats to the partner or ex-partner and to their children, belongings or even pets.

First I will spend a little more time talking about the definition, before moving on to other measures we are currently looking at to address violence. I will conclude by explaining some of our concerns with the bill.

First, I have discussed the topic with my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord on a number of occasions. That is how I found out that Megan Stephens, one of the witnesses who participated in the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights' study, had mentioned a minor complication, namely, the fact that there is no universally accepted definition. However, the following are some of the definitions that were given over the course of the study: limiting transportation, denying access to household, controlling food consumption, disconnecting phone lines, breaking cell phones and preventing them from going to work or going to school. Combined together, all those forms of behaviour fall under coercive control.

Abusive partners uses isolation, both physical and psychological, as a means to control their partner's contact with friends and family to emotionally bind the partner to them with the shackles of fear, dependency and coercive tactics of control.

Private Members' Business

In some cases, the violent partner uses state-sanctioned structures to continue to coerce and control their victim by creating problems related to custody of the children and visitation rights. The justice system is used as a weapon against the victim. According to a study published by Statistics Canada in April 2021, intimate partner violence is a serious problem, and controlling and coercive behaviours are an integral part of that. It is difficult to know the exact scope of this type of violence in Canada, because most cases are not reported to the police.

I want to point out that, in 2021, we were in the midst of the pandemic and victims were at home with their abusers 24-7. The fact that most cases of intimate partner violence are not reported to the police is the biggest impediment to determining how many people are affected, documenting the situation and implementing solutions for the victims of these types of behaviour. It is difficult for them to find a way to talk to someone.

During her testimony in committee, Lisa Smylie, the director general of communications and public affairs for the research, results and delivery branch at the Department for Women and Gender Equality, said that only about 36% of domestic violence incidents and 5% of sexual assaults are reported to the police. Those numbers are very low.

According to the data reported by the country's police forces in 2018, women living in rural areas experience intimate partner violence the most. That is also important to note. What is more, even though coercive and controlling violence may be present in other cases, it is present in 95% of cases of domestic violence as we know it.

Today, it is facilitated by technological advances such as geolocation systems, miniature cameras, smart phones and social media platforms. This makes everything more complex. All these things make it easier for the abusers when they want to continue to inflict harm and reinforce the isolation and control, regardless of where their victim may be. There are also the traditional forms of blackmail on social media, such as identity theft, the repeated sending of threatening messages or the disclosure of personal information or content about the victim that is sexual in nature.

In light of the testimony offered during the study at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, a rather high number of offences under the Criminal Code can apply to domestic violence. The committee noted a few problems with the enforcement of the current legislation in the cases of victims of coercive or controlling violence.

Victims are wary of and have little confidence in existing mechanisms, police services and the justice system to adequately deal with their trauma. A number of stakeholders noted that victims believe that they will not be taken seriously and they worry about myths. They do not want to be judged by institutions on their credibility when they report their abusers.

Abusers often create financial and other forms of dependence, which limits the actions that victims caught in this vicious circle can take, because they could lose everything, end up on the street or lose custody of their children.

• (1715)

The divide between the criminal justice system, family courts and community organizations needs to be addressed.

When elements of coercive control and other forms of control are present, the criminal and judicial systems too often say that simply telling one's story is not enough to file a complaint.

Lastly, one of the most serious obstacles is the under-enforcement of the law. Multiple charges against violent men are often reduced to a single charge, usually assault. This charge is then often withdrawn in exchange for a peace bond. This is the infamous section 810.

The many femicides and cases of harassment demonstrate the limitations and the weakness of section 810 in cases where violent men pose a high risk of reoffending. They must be treated differently and required to wear an electronic monitoring device.

Second, the bill proposed by the member for Victoria is part of a growing trend among legislators to focus on coercive violence. In recent years, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights released a report on this issue, which was presented in the House on April 27, 2021. The Standing Committee on the Status of Women also touched on the issue during its study on intimate partner violence and made two motions a priority for the winter of 2024, one of which was my study proposal to look at international best practices in this area and try to learn from them.

I also examined this issue to a lesser degree at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, when I participated a few times in its study on safe practices in sport and the topic of coercive control came up.

More recently, the Liberal member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle's Bill C-233, which was also examined by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, received royal assent on April 27.

The bill amended the Criminal Code to require judges, in cases of domestic violence, to consider whether it is appropriate for the accused to wear an electronic monitoring device before issuing a release order. In addition, the bill amended the Judges Act to include an obligation to hold continuing education seminars on issues of sexual assault, intimate partner violence and coercive control.

To a lesser extent, Bill C-21, which is currently before the Senate, focuses primarily on gun control and revoking possession when an individual is suspected of, or has engaged in, domestic violence, including coercive and controlling behaviour. This is part of a trend.

Private Members' Business

Third, Bill C-332 amends the Criminal Code, after section 264, by introducing the concept of controlling or coercive conduct as a criminal offence. The Bloc Québécois supports the objective of Bill C-332. However, we see several major shortcomings that will have to be studied in committee. The scope of the bill should be expanded to allow former spouses or other family members who are not part of the household to testify, in order to break the infamous “one person's word against another's” system. That is good.

What is more, consideration of testimony from neighbours, colleagues or others might also make it easier for victims to come forward. The severity of sentences and the consideration given to children in cases of coercive or controlling violent behaviour are other important factors. Reviewing the grounds on which prosecutors drop several charges and opt for the lowest common denominator shows that this can hinder the administration of justice and undermine public confidence and the victims' confidence in the courts that deal with these issues. We have to study all of that.

There are already 35 sections in the Criminal Code that can apply to domestic or family violence. They just need to be rigorously enforced, and we need to think of ways of ensuring that prosecutors rely on these sections more often in cases of coercive or controlling violence. We also need to address the difficulties associated with collecting evidence and ensuring solid and sound prosecution.

Megan Stephens, Executive Director and General Counsel at Women's Legal Education and Action Fund argued that Bill C-247 and Bill C-332 can make the legislation unnecessarily complex because new concepts are being introduced when the Criminal Code already contains very similar offences, particularly on criminal harassment and human trafficking. We will need to take a closer look at that.

The wording of the two NDP members' bills does not address the issue of victims having to relive their trauma. They will have to retell their stories over and over again, just as they do now, which has been roundly criticized. Furthermore, Bill C-332, as currently drafted, does not change how these matters are dealt with by the courts and the authorities.

In closing, if we want to ensure that this never happens again, if we want to put an end to this shadow epidemic, we must take action. We must take action because violence is not always physical, but it always hurts.

As a final point, the Quebec National Assembly has also made this call. I had a discussion with an MNA in Quebec City this summer. She told me that the Quebec National Assembly had done its part, that it had produced the report “Rebuilding Trust” and said that the ball was now in Ottawa's court. She said that the National Assembly does not have jurisdiction to study coercive control in the Criminal Code. I took it upon myself to heed the call from the Quebec National Assembly, a call made by female MNAs who did exceptional, non-partisan work.

Let us try to examine it intelligently in committee.

• (1720)

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak in this House in support of Bill C-332, an act to amend the Criminal Code, referring to controlling or coercive conduct.

I want to begin by thanking my colleague, the member of Parliament for Victoria, for her hard work on this historic piece of legislation. I know that my colleague has been a long-time defender of women's rights; she has been outspoken about the need for federal leadership and action to end violence against women and gender-based violence. The presentation of this bill is part of her work as an MP and as an advocate.

We all know this bill is sorely needed and will make a difference. We could even say that it has the power to save lives across the country.

We know that this bill addresses a critical component of domestic violence by making controlling or coercive conduct in intimate relationships a criminal offence. This bill would amend the Criminal Code to create a new offence of “engag[ing] in controlling or coercive conduct”.

This involves patterns of behaviour that have significant impacts on the person toward whom the conduct is directed, including a fear of violence, a decline in their physical or mental health or a substantial adverse effect on their day-to-day activities. Coercive and controlling behaviour is also one of the most consistent early warning signs in femicides in intimate partnerships, even when no physical violence has occurred.

We know that Canada desperately needs this kind of legislation and that women in Canada desperately need the federal government to do much more to end the epidemic of violence against women. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, calls to the police about domestic violence have risen by 50%. We are also aware that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights recommended addressing coercive and controlling behaviour in a report from the spring of 2021.

We, in the NDP, have heard calls from survivors of abuse to criminalize coercive and controlling behaviour. We are the only party to take the steps necessary to present legislation to address this issue.

There are warning signs of aggressive behaviour in toxic relationships, which include coercive and controlling behaviour. By amending the Criminal Code, the NDP is giving victims more tools to address domestic abuse and stepping up the fight against all forms of domestic violence.

Private Members' Business

I want to go back to that first point about the increase in calls to police by 50% when it comes to domestic violence. We are in 2023, and it has now been multiple decades where we have heard openly and been aware of many reports, made changes to our justice system and put systems and services in place to support women fleeing violence. To hear that number of a 50% increase in domestic violence is chilling. We all know of that reality, whether it is in our communities, in our households or among our friends. Depending on what experiences women are having, we know that there has been a sharp increase in violence against women.

We are coming up to December 6, when we think of the women who were shot dead by a misogynist at École Polytechnique. Every year we read the names of other women, as well, who have been the target of misogyny and have been killed because they are women. We read of women who have been killed by their partners or ex-partners.

We know that these numbers are not going down. To hear of an increase of 50% in calls to the police when it comes to domestic violence is not only chilling but also ought to be a call to action. We need this legislation passed, and we need to go much further to end domestic violence and gender-based violence in our country.

Just recently, in October, many of us were shaken by the femicide in northern Ontario, in Sault Ste. Marie. Angie Sweeney was killed, along with her three children, and another woman was shot by the ex-domestic partner. This femicide shook many of us across the country, particularly those of us from and connected to northern communities. We know that domestic violence is a very serious matter there; despite the awareness and the supports, women continue to be victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence.

• (1725)

In my own constituency, in February, Noreen Tait, who lived in O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, which is also known as South Indian Lake, was killed by her former partner. The chief and leaders in the community came out right away and said that there need to be more supports for women fleeing violence, more supports for women who are trying to get on safe ground. I want to get into that a bit, because today's bill is an important step, and like I said, we need to go a lot further and see a lot more from the federal government.

The Liberals talked a good talk when they talked about investing in women after the years of cuts and lack of investment from the Harper Conservatives, but the reality is that the Liberals certainly have not stepped up in the way we need them to. I want to focus particularly on the fact that indigenous women continue to be disproportionately targeted by violence. We have yet to see a red dress alert, which my colleague from Winnipeg Centre has been pushing for. We have yet to see the kind of investment we need in housing, particularly in first nations communities for on-reserve housing. This was something that was brought up after the murder of Noreen Tait. In a community like South Indian Lake, which is desperate for housing, Noreen had nowhere to go. Knowing that the closest women's shelter is over an hour away, she needed her own home. This was known to everybody in the community, and because of the lack of funding by Liberal and Conservative governments, there is a housing crisis in first nations. It is a factor that renders indigenous women particularly vulnerable.

We also know there need to be investments in education. Again, thinking of indigenous communities, they need to be able to support women pursuing their education and better opportunities. We need to see investment in health care. I am very concerned about the lack of support when it comes to people seeking treatment for addictions and also seeking to break the cycles of violence they face. We need to see support in terms of the child welfare system, recognizing there are vicious cycles that often disproportionately impact mothers and other women.

Today is an important step in taking action when it comes to ending domestic violence by including the recognition in the Criminal Code of coercive control. I certainly hope that all parties will support this and that we can see the bill come to fruition as soon as possible to give that tool to women fleeing violence and to give that tool to women and their children and to communities that are seeking to support them. However, we have a long way to go to be able to end the gender-based violence we are seeing on the rise in our country and to address the crisis of femicide in our country. Finally, here we are talking about violence against women, and it is incumbent on us to push for an end to violence against women here at home and around the world.

Today, I also want to take a moment to reiterate my call for an immediate ceasefire in Israel and Palestine, recognizing that over 4,000 children and over 10,000 civilians, many of them women, have been killed already. We need all hostages to be freed. We need to make sure there is a ceasefire to end this human catastrophe.

I hope the bill put forward by my colleague from Victoria becomes a reality as soon as possible.

• (1730)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-332, an act to amend the Criminal Code, controlling or coercive conduct. The government certainly takes this matter extremely seriously. We recognize the fact that Bill C-332 proposes to create a new hybrid offence that would criminalize repeated controlling or coercive conduct toward a person to whom they are connected, including a spouse or other family member, which has a significant impact on the person at whom the conduct is directed.

Clearly, as I indicated, the government is interested in this. There are a few possible amendments that we would like to propose once this bill gets to committee. We are keen on seeing this through the process so that it can be deliberated at committee, studied and reported back to the House.

Adjournment Proceedings

We acknowledge that gender-based violence and intimate partner violence have no place in Canada and our government has made a priority to end them in all their forms. The Minister of Justice called gender-based violence an epidemic because it is an appropriate characterization of a serious and pervasive social issue that has immediate and long-term impacts for victims, survivors and their families. In fact, 44% of Canadian women report having experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. This is significant and a distressing figure.

The government is committed to ending gender-based violence in all its forms through preventative and responsive measures, including a responsive justice system. To that end, I do look forward to continuing this debate the next time it is before the House and getting it to committee so that we can bring legislation to this effect into law.

● (1735)

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

Before we go into Adjournment Proceedings, I will take a moment.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We shall remember them.

For those members who are going out to November 11 activities, please give our veterans and serving servicemen and women our best.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanic—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, may I just pause to say that I appreciated the words reminding us of why we wear our poppies. Let us remember to thank and honour our veterans and our current men and women in uniform.

Here in Adjournment Proceedings this evening, I am returning to a question I asked June 12. It was a question for the hon. member for Scarborough Southwest, who at the time was our minister for emergency preparedness. The emergency to which we are referring is, of course, the climate crisis, the climate emergency.

We have lived through quite a lot in my province of British Columbia. The summer of 2021 saw a heat dome, and in four days, 619 British Columbians died. We also saw forest fires throughout B.C. Then in November 2021, we had the atmospheric rivers that wiped out billions of dollars of infrastructure. The repairs are still taking place. I think it was July 1 that Lytton burned to the ground. There are still no properties built there.

Back in June of this year, I asked the former minister of emergency preparedness how we could better prepare. My assertion was that we are not prepared. I noted in my question that in California, insurance companies are now saying they are not going to insure for fires and floods because it is not an avoidable risk. The insurance industry is alarmed.

The response I had from the hon. minister was quite to point in saying the government is working to try to develop a national flood insurance plan. However, again, how do we manage these risks? There are multiple. There are the direct deaths in heat domes, the threat of fires, the threat of floods and the threat of hurricanes. We certainly experienced hurricane Fiona.

We have had the experience, which is undeniable, that burning fossil fuels has created an unstable global climate for which we are not prepared. I had hoped in raising this question tonight in Adjournment Proceedings that we could talk about how we better prepare. Obviously there is much more we could do to reduce emissions and reduce the ultimate impact that we are experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, within your home provinces of Nova Scotia, and I have the history of being from Cape Breton, we never had a hot, dry May, but several hot, dry Mays, one after another, left Nova Scotia experiencing wildfires this summer. We had a wildfire season across Canada like no other.

My position is this, and I am hoping the minister can engage with this in Adjournment Proceedings and that the government will respond. We need to create a standing emergency preparedness committee, with federal, provincial, municipal and indigenous governments. In that, we need to grapple with what to do to save lives.

Earlier this summer, I met with the mayor of the town of Ashcroft, British Columbia, who also plays a role as regional chair. She is discovering that if we want to use school buses to get people out of seniors residences, we better make sure over the course of the summer that the school district is insuring the school buses so they are available for emergencies.

There are multiple layers to this. We will do better if we create a standing committee that works collaboratively across all jurisdictions and all party lines and remembers we are in an emergency.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1740)

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to recognize and thank all firefighters, NGOs, CAF members and the public servants at the municipal, provincial and federal level who worked tirelessly to make sure that Canadians were safe. Together, they have faced the worst wildfire season ever recorded in Canada. More than 6,000 wildland fires burned more than 18 million hectares of land in Canada, but more importantly, they have forced more than 230,000 Canadians out of their homes. These Canadians now join the thousands affected by extreme weather events who have seen first-hand how the dire effects of climate change have destroyed communities and livelihoods.

This summer, our government came through for Canadians. When provinces were confronted with situations they could not face alone, we deployed the necessary resources to ensure the safety of everyone. During this year's wildfire season, the Government of Canada received requests for assistance related to wildfire situations in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. To help the provinces, we deployed the Canadian Armed Forces to assist in firefighting with on-the-ground resources and provided airlift capacity for the safe transport of evacuees, but our support involved multiple federal departments that proudly engaged in assisting Canadians, such as Employment and Social Development Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada, the RCMP, the Canadian Coast Guard, Health Canada, Parks Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, just to make sure all hands were on deck to help Canadians through the difficult times.

Climate change is putting an ever-growing strain on the finances of Canadians, but they can rest assured that, when disaster strikes, their federal government will be there for them. Through the disaster financial assistance arrangements, we can cover up to 90% of the cost of evacuation operations, restoring public works and infrastructure, as well as replacing or repairing basic, essential personal property of individuals, small businesses and farmsteads.

We know that these climate-related hazards pose significant risks to the safety of Canadians, as well as to our economy and our natural environment. We will continue to work with our provincial and territorial partners, indigenous organizations and non-governmental partners to strengthen Canada's ability to assess risks, mitigate the effects of disasters, prepare for them, respond to them and recover from them.

I would like to thank the member for her ideas on a new standing committee, which I am sure the government will consider.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that the parliamentary secretary's answer is saying that they are looking at it. Let me just be clear that I am not talking about a standing committee of parliamentarians. I am talking about a working committee of governments: federal, provincial, territorial, indigenous and municipal.

We are at risk. People will lose their lives. The current government adaptation plan, for example, has a goal. I think they say that, by 2040, no more Canadians will die in heat domes. That is absurd. We should have the goal that, by tomorrow, no Canadians will die in heat domes. The problem is that the government's approach is

that everyone needs to have air conditioning so people will not die in heat domes.

What we need to do is know how to save the lives of people who do not have air conditioning, which involves better first responders and knowing the things people can do to save lives, which include, for instance, cold showers or getting into the water. There are things we need to do so we are exchanging information with each other, and we need to do it now.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands's knowledge and experience. I agree that we can do more, and we must do more. I would reiterate that a key part of the federal response also comes from the many NGOs we proudly support such as the Canadian Red Cross, St. John Ambulance, the Salvation Army and the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada.

This summer we added an additional \$82 million to help them maintain a skilled and qualified group of volunteer responders and emergency management professionals who can rapidly deploy, on short notice, support in the response to emergency events. This funding will enable them to recruit and train response teams, purchase equipment, and adapt their protocols and procedures to address the needs of specific communities, including vulnerable populations.

• (1745)

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to follow up on a question I raised in the House on November 1 in response to the government's announcement that excludes 97% from the three-year suspension of the carbon tax. Constituents from my riding of Yorkton—Melville are appalled by this blatant division of Canadians into two classes, and rightly so.

The province of Saskatchewan is a leading force in the advancement of clean energy and technology. Time and time again, the NDP-Liberal government seems to forget this. Therefore, let me take a moment to clearly outline how Saskatchewan is leading on this file and why we do not need a carbon tax to change our behaviours. We are and have been proactive and progressive on continuing to steward our environment. We love it; we depend on it.

Adjournment Proceedings

Nearly 10 years ago, the Boundary Dam power station became the first power station in the world to successfully use carbon capture and storage technology. To match the 4.6 million tonnes of CO₂ captured by this unit, we would need to plant more than 69 million trees and let them grow for 10 years to get the same results.

More recently, in 2022, Saskatchewan farmers exceeded all provinces in sequestering 12.8 million tonnes of carbon, which is the equivalent of taking 2.78 million cars off the road for a year.

We can also consider that Saskatchewan's nuclear energy potential could fulfill 170% of Canada's total annual electricity demands. As if this were not enough, the same province is the world's leading supplier of uranium, with 90% of uranium being exported. It is estimated that one in 20 homes in the U.S. is powered by Saskatchewan uranium.

Let us not forget the fact that Saskatchewan is the world's largest and greenest potash producer. Potash mines in the province produce only half the emissions per tonne of potash as competing jurisdictions and still manage to achieve 30% of global production.

These are only a few examples of Saskatchewan's sustainable initiatives, and there are many more. Beyond what has already been accomplished, experts estimate that 131,000 clean energy jobs will be added between 2025 and 2050 in Saskatchewan as the province continues to move toward a net-zero economy.

Given all this, one would expect to see strong support for my province from the Liberal government. Sadly, this has not been and will not be the case. From the NDP-Liberal government, and now a new carbon tax coalition with the separatist Bloc, we only see inflationary taxes that are hurting our families.

The Minister of Rural Economic Development has confirmed what we knew all along: The carbon tax was never about climate change. It has always been about politics. Canadians have been told that reducing emissions will not exempt them from the tax, whereas voting Liberal will.

Instead of helping struggling families, the Prime Minister is dividing Canadians into two classes: those who get relief from his punitive taxes and those who do not. The Prime Minister is only concerned about his party's plummeting poll numbers, not about doing what is right for all Canadians.

The people of my province and riding are resilient. Cold winters with temperatures dropping down to -40°C do not stop us. Driving long distances in the freezing cold weather is something we have to do, because we are rural communities.

Ninety per cent of Saskatchewan households are heated with natural gas; because they do not vote Liberal, they are given no relief from this punitive tax that is making life unaffordable. In terms of the 10% increase to the rural payment, a whole total of \$11.33 will not even buy a Big Mac meal. Canadians can now see more than ever that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Even he knows this, but he is only willing to relieve the burden off the backs of 3% of Canadians.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government understands that many Canadian families are strug-

gling to make ends meet. That is why we have been putting forward measures since 2015 to support the Canadians who need it the most. For example, we have increased the old age security benefit for people aged 75 and over. We strengthened the Canada workers benefit to better support millions of low- and modest-income workers, and we increased benefits for low-income seniors by enhancing the guaranteed income supplement.

Similarly, it was to support lower-income Canadians that the government made the decision to temporarily pause the application of the federal fuel charge on deliveries of heating oil. We did this not simply because it is a source of home heating, but because heating oil is the most expensive form of home heating. Because heating oil is expensive, lower-income Canadians face particular hardship incurring these costs. Low-income and rural residents are trapped in a vicious cycle. They are stuck having to pay for the most expensive form of home heating, the cost of which is preventing them from investing in cleaner, more affordable forms of home heating.

I would like to make something absolutely clear: Heating oil is the only exception. There will be no other carve-outs from the federal price on pollution for other forms of home heating, period. Our focus is to help Canadians move away from using heating oil to heat their homes. That is why we are turning to heat pumps, which are, by far, one of the best ways for homeowners to move away from heating oil. Compared to other electric heating sources, heat pumps are two to three times more efficient.

To strengthen the program, the federal government is working with the provinces and territories to increase the amount of federal assistance eligible homeowners can receive for the installation of a heat pump from \$10,000 to \$15,000. This will add up to an additional \$5,000 in grants to complement the provincial and territorial contributions through codelivery arrangements. This would make the average heat pump and installation free for low- to medium-income households as we continue to minimize upfront costs and make federal programs even easier to access for all households. To help Canadians make the switch, an initial payment of \$250 will be offered to low- and middle-income households that currently heat with oil, if they register and have a heat pump installed under a federal-provincial program.

The reality is that Canada is deeply impacted by climate change, and inaction such as that proposed by the opposition is simply not possible anymore. We have to do something to fight climate change, or Canadians will face disastrous consequences. Let us not forget that climate change threatens not only the health and safety of Canadians but also their financial security and their economic well-being.

Fortunately, there is an effective way to fight climate change, and that is what we are doing with our pollution pricing system. This system encourages innovation, reduces emissions and promotes greener behaviour. What is more, it gives Canadian householders and business owners the flexibility to decide when and how they want to make these changes. Our pricing system is here to stay.

• (1750)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, let us be really clear: Any of the band-aid benefits that the government has brought forward and any changes it has made on behalf of seniors have been negated by its increased taxes, its inflation and its interest rates. The government has spent all of the money, borrowed all of the money and printed all of the money it can. That is why our country is in the condition it is in. The Liberals do not get it, and their gimmicks are not helping Canadians. The Prime Minister has admitted he is doubling down on the quadrupling of the carbon tax for everyone but the 3% whom he found himself needing to respond to because of the polls and the fact that he was so unpopular because of the carbon tax.

Canadians cannot afford the current Liberal government or its taxes. Because of the current government, the prices of heat, gas and groceries have skyrocketed, and the lives of Canadians are being hurt. Canadian winters are cold, and people need to heat their home. The recent three-year suspension of the carbon tax on home heating oil is an acknowledgement of what we have been saying on this side of the House: The carbon tax is hurting Canadians and making life unaffordable.

Ms. Lisa Hefner: Mr. Speaker, something must be done about climate change, and experts agree that our system is the right thing to do. Our government is committed to helping Canadians transition from heating oil to heat pumps, which are a much greener option. In fact, the Prime Minister recently announced measures to provide financial support to Canadians who are making this transition.

[Translation]

SPORTS

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be fairly direct with the government about the Ignoble Purpose Award it received a few weeks ago. After hearing testimony from survivors and whistle-blowers, and considering that 98% of the 114 witnesses heard by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage called for a public inquiry into abuse and mistreatment in sports, it is clear to me that any other option is no longer an option at all, and I am not going to dismiss their request out of hand. We need to get to the bottom of the systemic problems in sport.

Being the recipient of an ignoble award is a reminder of the importance of integrity in sports, as well as the underlying responsi-

bilities. Sport is not just about competitions and medals. It plays an essential role in the health, well-being and development of individuals. It reinforces the values of honesty, teamwork and self-improvement while fostering inclusion and diversity, which enable people from all walks of life to come together around a common passion. Integrity in sports is compromised by the many abuses that have been reported and the wilful blindness of government, not to mention conflict situations.

In England, investigations into foreign interference in sport are under way. This has ramifications all the way to Canada. The minister is all too aware of this, since she is a former employee of the Canadian Olympic Committee, the International Olympic Committee's franchise in Canada.

Every time the Minister of Sport appeared before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, we reminded her of how Sport Canada and the funding of multi-sport organizations are at the root of many of the problems we are seeing right now. That is what has been coming out of the committee hearings that have taken place this past year. Has she forgotten that she is accountable for failing to follow up on three separate requests to appear before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage since July 26, 2022? She was called to appear on December 13, 2022, April 17, 2023 and again on June 1, 2023. Patience has its limits.

Until we actually have some guarantees in place, I am prepared to stand up in the House as often as I am permitted and I will raise this issue in every forum to continue to consistently get this message across. Perhaps I sound like a broken record on this issue, but I think that this is something that we can control and that we cannot let slide.

The Government of Canada won an ignoble purpose award for its apathy toward abuse in sport. This should not be seen as a mere red flag, but a full-on red alert. A public inquiry is long overdue. Sport does not deserve contempt, but the blatant indifference toward this issue is simply unacceptable. Since the appointment of a new Minister of Sport, the silence has been deafening. We hear nothing but crickets.

I would just like to remind the House of the motion I brought on June 22, 2022, a year and a half ago, which was adopted unanimously:

That the House call for an independent inquiry into Hockey Canada's handling of the events of June 2018, in order to determine whether this was an isolated event or whether there are deficiencies in Hockey Canada's handling of reported complaints of sexual assault, sexual harassment and other types of misconduct.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is crystal clear that the government has done nothing about this issue. Though the motion was adopted unanimously by the House of Commons, it did not spur the government to action. The minister has repeatedly been asked to appear before the sport committee and hold herself to account. In May, the Minister of Sport held a press conference at which she announced she would launch an independent public inquiry. That was more than six months ago, but there is still no sign of that public inquiry.

This Parliament's very credibility is at stake, along with the credibility of all parents and athletes who put their kids in organized sport. When will the government launch this independent public inquiry?

• (1755)

[*English*]

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his important work on the issue of safe sport.

[*Translation*]

I would like to begin by thanking and honouring the survivors. I admire the courage of those who came forward so we could learn, better protect our children and improve our systems and processes. What happened to them should not have happened. We are committed to ensuring they get support.

[*English*]

Sport has the power to create positive change. Sport fills communities. It ignites national pride. However, with insufficient safeguards and accountability, sport can also do harm.

Unfortunately, not every participant in sport has positive experiences. There continue to be calls from victims and survivors in the broader sport community to address power imbalances between athletes and sport organizations, provide greater protections against maltreatment and hold organizations and individuals accountable.

I am committed to a process that will investigate the sport system in Canada, one that is trauma-informed, that supports athlete survivors and that draws on outside experts. This is so important for the future of sport, and we need to take the time to do it right.

[*Translation*]

Since 2018, our government has been working to ensure safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for everyone, while requiring all sport organizations funded by the Government of Canada to take measures to prevent and address maltreatment in sport.

The Government of Canada also supported the development of the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport, or UCCMS. That is a key example of the positive momentum that can be created when our government works closely

with its partners, in this case national sport leaders and subject matter experts. The result is that the UCCMS is the core document that sets harmonized rules to be adopted by sport organizations that receive funding from the Government of Canada to advance a respectful sport culture that delivers quality, inclusive, accessible, welcoming and safe sport experiences.

• (1800)

[*English*]

In June 2021, the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner launched its operations as the entity responsible for administering the UCCMS and overseeing complaints of maltreatment. The office uses trauma-informed processes that are compassionate and efficient and that provide fairness, respect and equity to all parties involved.

These measures are only part of the solution. The responsibility of ensuring a safe sport environment must be shared by all leaders in the field.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for being here, for working with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and for her empathy. I also want to say that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity has a reasonable excuse for his absence today.

I want to remind everyone that there is a crisis in sport, and everyone knows it. Survivors deserve more consideration from the Liberal government members who are responsible for sport. Athletes and their families are calling for urgent recognition that the situation is dire, especially as the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris draw near. The Bloc Québécois is therefore calling for immediate action and urging the minister to stop playing hide-and-seek and launch an independent public inquiry into abuse in sport, as described in Bill 1.

Why is she waiting to launch the public inquiry? Why have there been so many resignations at various organizations, such as Own The Podium, Sport Canada and Hockey Canada, to name just a few? The house of cards is collapsing. It is time for answers.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, ensuring the safety of sport participants is a shared responsibility. That is why all of the ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation have committed to establishing an independent third-party mechanism within their respective jurisdictions.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Monday, November 20, at 11 a.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 7.

(The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.)

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