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# House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, September 24, 2025

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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● (1400)

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

### ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS

**Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are living in a troubling world where the truth and facts are slowly being buried under an onslaught of disinformation. Many experts are sounding the alarm in light of the rise in far-right ideas, the masculinist movement and fake news. All of this has an impact on democracy and public debate. With less space for reliable news, many people are a lot less informed.

Bill C-18 was supposed to require platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Google to negotiate agreements with the media for news content. Today, the widespread blocking of access to news continues, and it has been two years. This summer, in an effort to please President Trump, the Prime Minister even backed down on his commitment to tax these digital giants. They are not paying their share and are inundating us with fake news that inflames tensions and divisions.

Once again, the Liberals are giving in to the web giants and our democracy is paying the price.

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[English]

### STATUE OF MAZU IN BURNABY CENTRAL

**Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge an important part of Taiwanese culture.

This summer, I had the privilege of sharing my heritage with Burnaby Central by welcoming a statue of Mazu from a respected

temple in Taiwan. Like the good people of Burnaby Central, those in Taiwan carry the resilient spirit long-symbolized by Mazu. Also known as the goddess of the sea, Mazu is honoured across Asia for her strength, courage and hope. For centuries, she has guided travellers through turbulent waters, inspiring generations and offering protection equally to all.

Canada itself has been defined by the sea through migration, international trade and the courage of those who journeyed across seas to call the true north home. Just like Mazu offers safe harbour, we must lead Canada with vision, care and responsibility in uncertain times. Mazu's legacy reminds us that in our diversity lies our strength to build a Canada that is safe, inclusive, strong and free.

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### MALCOLM TORRANCE AWARD IN CANADIAN POLITICS

**Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Malcolm Torrance unexpectedly passed away peacefully in his sleep at age 20 on April 2, during the recent election. Malcolm was a loving son and trusted friend, a political science student, president of the University of Calgary's Campus Conservatives, a former Conservative intern known to many here on the Hill, director of the Calgary Crowfoot Conservative Association and, at the time of his death, an active and dedicated volunteer on my election team. During his short life, he had a significant impact on his community and touched the lives of many. While ideologically driven and having strong opinions, he always treated everyone with respect, including those with whom he did not agree.

As an ongoing celebration of Malcolm's life, the Malcolm Torrance award in Canadian politics will be established by his family, his friends and his University of Calgary colleagues. He leaves a legacy of friendship, memories, public service and inspiration to others.

Rest well, Malcolm.

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● (1405)

### FOOD PRICE TRANSPARENCY

**Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the summer, at various engagements, I was in my riding of Fleetwood—Port Kells where I had countless conversations with constituents. Their concerns came through loud and clear. People are worried about crime, extortion, bail reform and the rising cost of living.

*Statements by Members*

That is why the government is taking action. This includes the introduction of my private member's bill to establish a national framework to improve food price transparency, so Canadians can compare prices, make informed choices and save money at the grocery store. Canadians deserve a future that is fairer, safer and affordable. The government and I are committed to deliver on that.

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### CANADIAN FARMERS

**Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a busy time for farmers in Oxford and across our country as they bring home the harvest. Oxford is home to more than 3,000 grain farmers out of the 28,000 in our province who generate more than \$27 billion for our economy and support more than 90,000 jobs. Our farmers rise before dawn, work late and battle the elements.

However, today they face more than the weather; they face the Liberal government, which attacks their way of life. Farmers are burdened by rising input costs, red tape, supply chain disruptions, punishing fertilizer tariffs and a trade crisis that includes a 75% tariff on canola by Beijing. Despite the Prime Minister's claim of being a master negotiator, trade disputes with the U.S. and China have worsened. He even met with the Premier of China yesterday, and surprise, surprise, there is no deal. This hurts our farmers, and they pay the price. Despite it all, our farmers press on: long days in the field, early mornings and generations farming together.

As Conservatives, we thank God for our farmers, because when our farmers grow, Canada grows.

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[Translation]

### QUANTUM INSTITUTE

**Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome back my lovely colleagues.

We are returning from our ridings after a busy summer, no doubt more motivated than ever to take part in this new parliamentary session. I have returned with such pride in Sherbrooke that I cannot keep it to myself.

Today marks the 10th anniversary of Sherbrooke's Quantum Institute, which is accomplishing great things in a very competitive field. Created under Canada first, with the smallest grant awarded that year, the institute managed to turn its ambition into concrete results with the creation of companies such as Qubic, Nord Quantique and SB Quantum. These companies, born from student projects, are living proof of Sherbrooke's success.

With over \$230 million in research, 100 scientific articles per year in the most prestigious journals or international partnerships with France and Australia, the institute puts the Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke and Canada on the map and establishes itself as a world leader.

[English]

### PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

**Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the people of Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore. I would like to thank my community for putting their trust in me. I promise I will always work very hard to deserve it.

Today I would like to acknowledge my friend and the mayor of Windsor, Drew Dilkens. Mayor Dilkens is currently recovering from a recent surgery for prostate cancer. I admire him for his character, strength and leadership, and for candidly sharing his story and advocating for early detection. I am inspired to bring his message to Ottawa. September is the national Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Prostate cancer can be a silent killer but a simple blood test can save lives.

My message to all men is for themselves, for their children and for their friends and family. I ask them to please get tested.

I also ask that we keep our thoughts and prayers with Mayor Dilkens and his family during his recovery.

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● (1410)

### RECOGNITION OF THE PALESTINIAN STATE

**Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this Sunday was the International Day of Peace. It was also the day the government, under the Prime Minister's leadership, recognized the state of Palestine. We did this with our allies, the U.K., France and Australia. This was a historic moment.

The recognition of Palestine is in full keeping with Canada's long-standing support of the two-state solution. Since 1947, Canadian governments of all stripes have stood by this. Our foreign policy seeks to ensure that all in the region, regardless of ethnicity, faith or the borders one happens to be born within, can live in peace and security.

What is happening in Gaza is gut-wrenching. Children are being killed in the tens of thousands. Families are being repeatedly displaced. Starvation is settling in. The nightmare in Palestine has to stop. We need an end to this war and the release of all hostages and prisoners. We need peace for Palestinians, Israelis and all in the region.

*Statements by Members***OIL AND GAS EMISSIONS CAP**

**David Bexte (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, just yesterday, the Liberals voted to keep the Liberal energy production cap in place, a move that kills Canadian jobs and weakens our economy. This is not just bad policy. It is common sense ignored. The Liberals are choking off Canadian energy. The Prime Minister pats Beijing on the back, a regime building two new coal-fired power plants every week. The Parliamentary Budget Officer stated that the emissions cap will wipe out \$20 billion in GDP. It will cost over 40,000 jobs. That means families are struggling, communities are hurting and a country is falling behind. The emissions cap is a production cap.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers stated that the emissions cap has driven investment out of Canada. The Prime Minister promised a new era and that Canada will become an energy superpower. What do Canadians get? They get a bait and switch, a national interest list that does not even include a pipeline project.

Albertans know that the answer is not to keep strangling jobs with Ottawa's red tape. It is time to scrap this emissions cap. It is a production cap. Stop killing Canadian energy and revive our country.

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[Translation]

**JEAN-YVES POIRIER**

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a man who has shaped the heart and soul of Saint-Polycarpe, a century-old municipality in my riding.

Jean-Yves Poirier is wrapping up a distinguished career after 34 years of devoted service to his community, including 10 years as mayor. Mr. Poirier is passionate about his town. A hands-on man, he knows everyone in his community. He is interested in their stories and he shares in their celebrations and struggles. He supports people's well-being by being present and by listening to them. He exemplifies the dignity and nobility of public service.

Saint-Polycarpe owes him more than just his accomplishments within the municipality and the region. It is also indebted to him for his ability to bring together farmers, professionals, seniors and young families, who were all inspired by the same sense of community belonging.

Mr. Poirier's dedication will always be remembered in the minds and hearts of generations to come.

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[English]

**INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**Wade Grant (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we continue Gender Equality Week, I want to echo the words of the chair of the women's caucus, who said that every 48 hours in this country, a woman or girl is killed, often by an intimate partner. Unfortunately, another stat is that indigenous women and girls are disproportionately a part of that statistic; thirty per cent of them are indigenous women or girls, when they make up only five per cent of the population of Canada.

The crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls remains a national tragedy, tearing families apart, with communities grieving and families shattered. The tragedy is compounded by systems that have far too often abandoned them. Today I think back to my own community of Musqueam, where women, for thousands of years, were the matriarchs. They were the decision-makers. They were the ones we looked to in times of need and in times of crisis.

As a father of a young indigenous girl, I am so happy to be here in the House. She is here on the Hill with me today, seeing 104 women she can look up to, to strengthen her for the future of this country.

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**RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN STATE**

**Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals rewarded terror. Hamas started the awful war. It sliced babies, raped women and killed 1,200 people. It kidnapped over 250 people, and still holds 48 hostages. Listen to Hamas; it says that state recognition is a fruit of October 7, and they vow to repeat it again and again.

The Liberals reward the barbarism by recognizing Hamastan without preconditions, not even a return of the hostages. The Palestinian Authority in the West Bank has been paying terrorists to slaughter Jews for 20 years. Is that who the Prime Minister wants in charge? Hamas is responsible for every death in Gaza by setting up military installations in schools, mosques and hospitals. Everyone knows that.

The Islamic Jihad loves to cause civilian deaths because civilian deaths on TV advance its political causes like they do right now. Canada's recognition of the Palestinian state will result in more deaths. The Liberals recognized the terrorist state on Rosh Hashanah. Shame on them.

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● (1415)

**VANCOUVER GRANVILLE**

**Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this summer was an incredible season across the riding of Vancouver Granville. From local festivals such as the dragon boat races on our shore to the community days that were held across our riding, our neighbours came together in so many ways to showcase the vibrant spirit of our constituency.

*Statements by Members*

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers and community members who helped make all these events possible, in particular our own summer gathering, which saw hundreds of people come out to share food, stories and ideas. It was a testament to the strength of our community and the dedication of those who give their time to bring us all together.

Our constituents, including some who are in the gallery today, are the heartbeat of Vancouver Granville. Their engagement over the summer months has once again shown us that when we come together, we build a stronger, more connected community. I am honoured to carry their voices and their hopes back to Ottawa as we continue our work together here in the chamber.

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**PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

**Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in six months, the Prime Minister has proven he is good at only one thing: breaking promises. He promised the fastest-growing economy in the G7. Instead, he delivered the fastest-shrinking economy. He said Canadians should judge him by the prices at the grocery store. Food prices are now higher than ever before, since he has been Prime Minister.

“Build, baby, build”, the Prime Minister said. “Double the pace of home construction”, he said. Instead, it has been “block, baby, block”, and home building is down 16%. He said we will be building major projects at a speed we have not seen in generations; he must have meant glacial speeds. He has not granted a single permit.

The Prime Minister claimed he would get a deal done with the U.S. by July 21. “Elbows up”, he said, and yet elbows are firmly down, tucked in, and the Prime Minister is afraid to go into the corners. Canada still has no deal. He pledged he would spend less, but spending is up 8%, and the deficit is projected to reach over \$100 billion.

The Prime Minister fashions himself as a hockey player. Well, I am a hockey coach, and he should be benched.

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[Translation]

**BAKING ARTISANS IN ARGENTEUIL—LA PETITE-NATION**

**Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate two of our constituents from Montebello who are true baking artisans: Sabrina Sigouin, owner of La Belle Pâtisserie, and Sandra Major, owner of Le Sucre au Four.

Together, they were crowned overall winners at the International Baking Industry Exposition, or IBIE, in Las Vegas. The competition was held from September 13 to 17. IBIE is the grain-based food industry's largest event in the western hemisphere, bringing together the entire professional baking community.

In a fierce international competition, Sabrina and Sandra truly stood out for their sculpted buttercream cakes, fine craftsmanship, technical skill and overall creativity. Not only have they won a victory for Montebello, but they have also put Argenteuil—La Pe-

tite-Nation's regional talent in the national and even international spotlight.

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[English]

**FIREARMS**

**Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for indigenous people, the gun grab program threatens our aboriginal inherent and treaty rights to live off the land. Our hunting rifles are not the Prime Minister's political props; they are part of our way of life and tradition, passed down through generations and rooted in a responsibility to feed our families.

Confiscating lawful guns while smugglers pour illegal guns across the border shows how badly the Liberals have lost their way. How can judges, police officers and others involved in law enforcement and justice trust the public safety minister when he says one thing behind closed doors and another thing in the chamber? The \$742 million wasted on the program could have funded 5,000 police officers or 37,000 treatment beds, but instead, Canadians are feeling less safe, and indigenous peoples have our rights threatened.

The public safety minister is failing. He and the Prime Minister must be held accountable. Canadians deserve real safety, not Liberal games.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and replace the public safety minister?

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● (1420)

[Translation]

**MAISON INTERNATIONALE DE LA RIVE-SUD**

**Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great joy and a touch of personal pride that I rise today to mark the 50th anniversary of the Maison internationale de la Rive-Sud, or MIRS.

This organization, which has provided me with extraordinary professional and community experience, is instrumental in welcoming refugees and immigrants to Montreal's south shore and helping them integrate.

Founded in Longueuil in 1975 as a support for Quebec host families who volunteered to welcome refugees from southeast Asia, it relocated to Brossard in 1980. Over the decades, MIRS has become an essential partner in helping our region become more intercultural. From French-language training to employment integration, from consultation to advocacy, MIRS takes action and nurtures thousands of people who choose Montreal's south shore as the place to rebuild their lives.

All my life, I have been fortunate to work in professions that I am passionate about. For 15 years, the Maison internationale de la Rive-Sud was one of those passions. I offer it my heartfelt congratulations.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### FIREARMS

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Liberals, gun crime went up by 136% in five years. Their policy has been to waste money going after hunters and farmers and take money away from border services and law enforcement, and that is what led to this crime wave. The Minister of Public Safety admitted that this policy does not work. What they did was strictly for electoral reasons.

[English]

The public safety minister has admitted that going after farmers' and hunters' hunting rifles is not going to fight crime, so the only reason to do it is his politics. If he was telling the truth, then why not reverse? If not, why is he not fired?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the government is doing with the gun registry is putting in place a much more efficient way for Canadians to voluntarily return prohibited firearms for fair compensation. The government is going to do it right.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's own Minister of Public Safety says the government is doing it wrong. He was caught on tape saying the program will not work, and yet the Liberals are going to rip \$750 million away from our border services and police services to harass duck hunters and farmers by banning the firearms they use. This approach has led to a 130% increase in gun crime under the Liberals' watch. The police say they will not implement it. The minister says it is a bad idea, but they are doing it only for political reasons.

Why is the Prime Minister putting lives at risk for politics?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not even know where to begin, because of all the misrepresentations in the intervention. The person who is putting lives at risk is the Leader of the Opposition, who has voted against every single piece of gun legislation.

The Minister of Public Safety is doing it right. He is correcting an inefficient system to provide Canadians with—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I voted against the Liberal policy of reducing criminal sentences for those who use guns to commit extortion, commit robbery and commit other serious offences, while voting in favour of locking up criminals who use guns in the commission of crime. The police say that 90% of gun crime is done with guns that come illegally over the broken Liberal border.

### Oral Questions

The Liberal public safety minister admits that the Prime Minister is only playing politics. Will the Prime Minister stop the politics, fire the minister and leave Grandpa Joe's hunting rifle alone?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, I have too little time to address all the issues, but let me go back to something the Leader of the Opposition said. He described farmers and duck hunters using AR-15s to hunt. I do not see that in my great province of Alberta.

I also know that the Minister of Public Safety and the government are tightening the border with Bill C-2. Will the opposition stand up to support the tightening of the border, as the Leader of the Opposition claims he will do?

● (1425)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just admitted that he does not even know what his gun ban applies to. For example, this gun ban applies to 10-gauge and 12-gauge shotguns, which are used by the great people of Alberta and all Canadians for duck hunting. It applies to 70 .22-calibre firearms that are used by almost every farmer to go after gophers.

Will the Prime Minister stop wasting money banning gopher guns, read his briefing notes, so he knows what he is talking about, and fire that incompetent minister?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what this government is doing is providing fair compensation for Canadians to return illegal firearms and illegal assault rifles. What this government is doing is proposing the biggest tightening of our border in our nation's history. We want the support of the opposition to make sure that happens.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has absolutely no idea what guns he is banning. He is banning twenty-twos. These are known as farmers' guns for going after gophers and other pests. One of them is even called the Plinkster because that is the sound it makes when it bounces off a pop can.

The Prime Minister is wasting precious border and police resources, harassing farmers and banning duck hunters while real gun crime rages in our streets. Once again, will he pick up a briefing note so that he knows what he is talking about and go after the real criminals?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has his briefing notes. The RCMP has its experience. The RCMP vets this list and decides for this list what are real guns, what are assault rifles and what should be kept off the streets. That is the process.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's knowledge bank on this subject is now depleted, so we will move on to something else: the subject of food prices.

The Prime Minister said that he would be judged on prices at the grocery store. Well, the verdict is in: Food prices are rising 50% faster in Canada than in the U.S. and are almost double the Bank of Canada's target. The Daily Bread Food Bank says that there will be four million visitors to Toronto food banks, a doubling from over two years ago, yet the Prime Minister has three grocery taxes in place, and going up, while people line up at food banks.

Will he stop taxing food so Canadians can afford to eat?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me bring the Leader of the Opposition up to speed on taxes. This government cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. This government cut taxes on first-time homebuyers. This government cut the carbon tax.

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[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has, of course, read the factum filed on behalf of his government with the Supreme Court to attack secularism as it is understood in Quebec and the notwithstanding clause. He has, of course, approved it. This factum was, of course, ultimately signed by his Attorney General.

This is the man who sought the solemn support of Quebecers and who believed in their judgment. Does he actually think that Quebec will resort to using the notwithstanding clause to allow summary executions, take away women's right to vote, or bring back slavery?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what protects Canadians, Quebecers, men and women, young and old, is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is the Government of Canada's responsibility to defend the charter.

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want all Quebecers to see all the Liberals rise to insult them all as a whole. I want the Prime Minister to explain to me why, in his brief, he felt the need to mention the possible return of forced labour or slavery. I want him to explain to me why his members talk openly of racism. I want him to explain to me why he believes that Quebecers, members of North America's most progressive and open society, would want to bring back the death penalty and summary executions.

Why does he allow insults like these?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is simple. Canadians and Quebecers have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and it is the Government of Canada's job to defend it.

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Constitution we have was imposed on us. It contains a

notwithstanding clause that we have the right to use, much to the government's consternation considering the crass insults that it has been hurling not only at Quebec, but at other Canadian provinces as well.

Will the Prime Minister do the decent thing: withdraw this brief and apologize to Quebecers?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is not backing down. We are defending the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. With respect to use of the notwithstanding clause, that is a decision for the Supreme Court of Canada to make.

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[English]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what should we call a person who says one thing in public and then does the exact opposite thing in private? That is exactly what the public safety minister did. He called the Liberal \$750-million gun buyback program a politically motivated scam.

The minister's number one job is to keep Canadians safe. Violent crime and gun crime are up, and 90% of gun crimes, police say, are committed with illegal guns, yet he calls his main plan a scam.

This is stunning incompetence. Why has he not been fired?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was proud to launch the assault-style firearms compensation program in Nova Scotia. We look forward to expanding it across Canada. It is part of a broader plan to ensure that our guns are off our streets. It includes changes to the Criminal Code. It includes resources at the border, a \$1.3-billion investment at the border.

Bill C-2 is in the House today. I invite the party opposite to support us so that we can get that through Parliament.

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, except that, in a private conversation, the minister said the exact opposite. He called the Liberal gun buyback a politically motivated scam.

Imagine what could be done with this \$750 million. How many police officers could be hired? How many border officers could be hired? How many scanners could be purchased to find the illegal guns coming in from the United States?

The minister is doing nothing. He is pushing forward with his politically motivated scam. Canadians deserve better. They deserve to be safe. This is staggering incompetence. Why will the Prime Minister not fire him?



**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, staggering incompetence is when someone thinks that AR-15s can be used for hunting and farming.

We have brought forward a very important plan in Nova Scotia. We look forward to expanding it across Canada. We look forward to doing that in the near future.

We are going to be investing in 1,000 new RCMP, as well as 1,000 new CBSA officers. We will ensure that our borders are safe and guns are off our streets.

• (1435)

**John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 600 foreign nationals with criminal convictions are roaming around Canadian cities. More than half are on the CBSA's wanted list, and their whereabouts are unknown. Over 70% of these non-citizen criminals have been convicted of serious crimes, including sexual assault. The public safety minister has one job, which is to keep Canadians safe. On this and many other issues, he is failing miserably.

It is really hard to believe that the Prime Minister, just yesterday, said he has confidence in the minister. Why will he not fire the minister? Not doing so calls into question the Prime Minister's judgment.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year, the Canada Border Service Agency has removed over 20,000 people. That is one of the largest removals of people in Canadian history. CBSA will continue to do its job.

We will ensure that we hire another 1,000 new CBSA officers to strengthen the border and ensure enforcement. We will continue to make sure our borders are safe. We will, at the same time, ensure that guns are off our streets.

**John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he cannot find them. He cannot find the 600 serious criminals who are non-citizens and should be deported but are roaming the streets of Canadian cities. The minister had the entire summer to come up with a plan to find these convicted non-citizen criminals, who have been convicted of crimes like sexual assault. He lost them and he cannot find them.

My question is for the Prime Minister. If this level of incompetence happened at Brookfield, would he still have confidence in that person or would he fire them?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year the Canada Border Services Agency will be removing 20,000 people who are not eligible to be here. This is one of the highest numbers in recorded Canadian history.

We will continue to strengthen the border. We will continue to remove those who are not eligible to be here. We will also be investing in 1,000 new CBSA officers, along with 1,000 new RCMP officers, to make our border stronger.

**Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the number one job of the public safety minister is to keep Canadians safe. The Liberals promised to hire 1,000 border officers, yet their own documents reveal they have not hired any and have no plans to do so ei-

ther. This will result in more guns and fentanyl being smuggled across borders like Windsor and Sarnia.

The public safety minister has failed miserably. How does the Prime Minister still have confidence in the minister? Why will he not fire him?

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this new government has made historic investments in our border, and that goes for CBSA as well. We are in the process of starting to hire 1,000 new personnel for the CBSA and 1,000 new personnel for the RCMP. We are going to do the work necessary so that guns do not get into Canada.

We will make these necessary investments, while all the Conservatives did was make cuts, cuts to the CBSA, cuts to the RCMP and cuts to law enforcement that needed them the most. We are going to invest in these programs to make sure that we can fight crime in Canada.

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[Translation]

## FIREARMS

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal governance, crime in Canada is on the rise. Violent crime is up by more than 55%. Gun crime is up over 130%. Extortion is up over 330%. That is the Liberal record after 10 years.

Now the Minister of Public Safety has admitted that the gun buy-back program is not working. It has failed. It is a waste of money and is not making Canadians any safer.

Why is the Prime Minister keeping someone at the head of public safety who does not believe in this very important program at all?

[English]

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to accept criticism from the Conservatives when it comes to issues of crime, given their completely lackadaisical approach to protecting Canadians against gun violence. When we look at their record, when they were last in government, they eroded investments at the border, making it easier to have guns illegally smuggled into this country. At every opportunity, they have voted against measures that take assault-style weapons off our streets.

*Oral Questions*

We have put measures in place that ban the kinds of weapons that were used to kill RCMP officers in Moncton, that killed people during the École Polytechnique shooting and that will potentially kill people going forward. We need to take gun crimes seriously.

● (1440)

[Translation]

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice should focus his efforts on trying to convince the Minister of Public Safety, because that minister does not think the gun buyback program is working. On the contrary, \$750 million has been wasted. The public safety minister said so himself, and yet the Prime Minister is keeping him in his position.

How can the Prime Minister put up with a guy who thinks the exact opposite of what he says publicly when, in private, he acknowledges that the program is not working?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I survived the Polytechnique femicide where 14 women lost their lives.

In 1990, the largest paper petition was tabled here in the House of Commons. It asked for the removal of assault-style firearms from our streets. This was in 1990 and, even today, more than 70% of Canadians, including rural Canadians, are in favour. This is not about going after hunters or farmers. It is about firearms that are meant to kill.

We made a promise and we will keep it. It will get done.

\* \* \*

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, people say that when the U.S. sneezes, Canada catches a cold.

That is undoubtedly why, while Donald Trump rails against climate change at the UN General Assembly, Canada is turning into a climate change denier with Bill C-5.

Some 250 elected municipal officials have formed a coalition to ask the Prime Minister to build the country instead of burning it. They are demanding that the government's major projects prioritize public transit, energy-efficient housing, to mention a few, but not oil and gas.

Will the government listen to the mayors or to Donald Trump?

**Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if my colleague paid attention yesterday and previous days, he would have heard our Prime Minister at the UN talking about climate change and how Canada will continue to be a leader in the fight against climate change. We are doing a good job.

I hope that my colleague will help us.

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the 250 municipal officials are reminding us that climate change is real. This summer alone, 95 communities experienced unsafe air quality, 54 were impacted by wildfires, 37 were forced to evacuate and 29 experienced extreme heat.

As the mayor of Montreal said, we need to develop the economy by moving away from fossil fuel development as much as possible.

Do the Liberals not understand that we need to move away from oil and gas, not promote it?

**Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it seems that the Bloc Québécois member opposite did not listen to the right speech. If he had listened to our Prime Minister, he would have heard that we take the fight against climate change seriously.

We will continue to do good work. It is important if we are to build a strong country. We will continue to do that.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal mismanagement, Canadians cannot afford to put food on the table. In August, food inflation outpaced overall inflation by 84%, and food prices have gone up another 3.5%.

It was the Prime Minister who told Canadians he would be judged by the cost of food. It is now Canadians who are paying the price for 10 years of Liberal photo ops, higher inflation and broken Canadian promises.

Is this the Canadian dream the Prime Minister promised, a country where Canadians cannot feed their families?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, do members know what the best predictor of future behaviour is? It is past behaviour. That is right. Canadians have watched—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order.

The minister may continue.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, they might not applaud so loudly after I read through the list of things these folks have voted against year after year: the school food program, child care, tax cuts, support for training, support for union investments and Canada summer jobs.

Canadians wanted a government that believes in them and invests in them, and they have that with this government.

● (1445)

**John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us look at the past record.

Justin Trudeau promised Canadians that he would lower food prices by Thanksgiving 2023. It never happened. The current Prime Minister told Canadians that he should be judged by the cost of food at the grocery store. Well, judgment has been rendered. Beef is up 33%, grapes are up 22%, coffee is up 24% and now we have apple farmers raising the alarm about a sharp increase in theft of their product because Canadians cannot afford the grocery store.

How many people and how many families are going to be forced to the food bank before the Prime Minister admits to Canadians that he broke his promise?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if there is a silver lining, it is that I see some promise in perhaps the member's supporting the budget that will be tabled very shortly this fall, where we will propose ambitious investments in Canadians, in Canadian families, in Canadian workplaces, in Canadian unions, in major projects and in our national defence system.

I can only hope that Conservatives have seen the light. They should stop voting against Canadian interests.

**Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister jets around the world shaking hands with dictators and diplomats, Canadians are lining up at food banks in record numbers. He says he wants to be judged by the price of food in grocery stores, but he is too busy seeking approval at the UN to notice how much worse food insecurity is now for Canadians. Food prices have risen 50% faster in Canada than in the United States since March.

How many more families must go hungry before the Prime Minister admits he has failed?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have enormous respect for the member, but it seems he was missing in action this summer, because this summer, 22 million Canadians got a tax cut. He should be standing there celebrating, but instead he fought against child care, he fought against the Canadian dental care program and he voted against the school food program.

At every step of the way, the Conservatives fought against Canadians. We will stand on the side of Canadians.

**Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, from what we see, the Liberal government cares more about international headlines than about bread lines that Canadians are stuck in. They are asking, "What about us?" as food insecurity reaches a crisis point across the country. In my area, Simcoe county, a third of households cannot afford to properly feed their family.

Millions of Canadians are chasing their next meal, so why is the Prime Minister more focused on chasing applause from world leaders than on the crisis right here at home?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there might have been a new election, but it is the same old Conservatives. The same old Conservative slogans will not feed children, but what is going to help families is taking actions like cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians. Instead of fighting against child care, instead of fighting

against pharmacare and instead of fighting against dental care, let Canadians see if Conservatives are going to vote for the budget, which will be generational, to build this country.

[Translation]

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal governance and out-of-control spending, the cost of living is skyrocketing. Our seniors are now skipping a meal a day in order to be able to afford their rent.

The Prime Minister broke his promise. He is spending more and delivering fewer results. Every month, the Moisson Beauce food bank receives 6,000 requests for assistance from people and, unfortunately, 37% of them are children. That does not make any sense.

Will this Prime Minister stop attacking Canadian families and address the real problems that the Liberals themselves created?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are all gathered here together in the House of Commons to make life better for Canadians, and the goal is, of course, to be able to work together to respond to Canadians' needs.

I would like to tell my colleague that, last week, the Bank of Canada cut its key interest rate, which means that many people in Canada, including homeowners and business owners, will finally be able to get some help in making ends meet at the end of the year. What I can also say is that we cut taxes for the middle class and for first-time homebuyers.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

[English]

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the parliamentary recess weeks, I, along with my Pacific colleagues, worked actively on the mandate set out by our right hon. Prime Minister to engage with industry in all sectors to identify Canadians who want to collaborate, invest and join us in building Canada.

Can the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources please elaborate on how British Columbia is contributing to this nation-building effort and how our economic strategy ensures that the needs of everyday citizens, like affordability, job creation and regional equity, are being met through partnerships and investments?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is undertaking a wartime-like effort to retool our economy and advance projects of national interest, including projects in British Columbia, like the LNG Canada phase 2 and the Red Chris mine, which will generate significant benefits for first nations communities. I would also like to let the member know that under “one project, one review”, we are advancing projects like the new Ksi Lisims LNG export facility, led by the Nisga'a Nation, which will also have a pipeline associated with that project. The project will be the second-largest—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Middlesex—London has the floor.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Lianne Rood (Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that Canadians would judge him by the costs at the grocery store. Well, the Liberal record holds that food bank use is up 142% since 2015, and the Daily Bread Food Bank expects four million visits in 2025. Families are cutting meals while costs are climbing and wages stall. He promised he would bring relief, but he did not bring home the bacon, an item that is up over 20%.

Will the Prime Minister stop the bait and switch and cut costs so that Canadian families can afford to eat?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, seniors, who built this country, should never have to choose between paying for groceries and heating their homes. That is why our government has taken action. We are cutting red tape, and we are building homes faster. We have introduced dental care, and more than two million seniors are already signed up to get benefits. We are building an economy that works for everyone.

Let us be clear, Conservatives have a record of pushing the retirement age higher, cutting benefits and leaving seniors behind. While they are voting against seniors, we are empowering older Canadians and protecting their dignity and peace of mind.

**Lianne Rood (Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Liberal promises are about as empty as Canadians' grocery carts. In Middlesex County, one in four families is food insecure, which means they have no idea where their next meal is going to come from. Food banks cannot keep their shelves stocked. At the checkout, grapes are up 22%, canned soup is up 26%, coffee is up 22% and sugar is up 20%.

The Prime Minister's policies have clearly failed. Will he back measures that actually cut costs, or will he keep feeding inflation while Canadians starve?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, families clearly need support to tackle food insecurity. That is why we are ensuring that more children are getting nutritious meals at school, while saving parents hundreds of dollars with the national school food program. We are putting more money in parents' pockets, tax-free, every month.

This is a program, may I remind my colleagues, that they all, on the opposite side of the House, voted against.

**Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said Canadians should judge him by prices at the grocery store. Since he was elected, Canada's food prices have surged 50% faster than those in the U.S.

After 10 years of Liberal rule, we have record lineups at food banks. Families cannot afford to put food on their table; they are struggling. The Prime Minister promised he would be different, but it is just another bait and switch.

When will the Prime Minister cut food taxes and stop his plan to double the deficit, in order to bring grocery prices down?

• (1455)

**Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, nutrition north is showing real progress, with results that are reaching more northerners every year. In its first year, more than 15,000 harvesters were supported, with hundreds of hunts and over 700 food-sharing initiatives, from Nain, Nunatsiavut, to Old Crow, Yukon, showing the program's reach across the north. In Nunavut, the price of flour in Rankin Inlet has dropped by more than 65%, and in Iglulik, a dozen eggs, which was once nearly \$10, is now just five dollars.

Today, 124 communities across the north are being directly supported through indigenous government initiatives—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

**Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal mismanagement, food bank usage in Canada is up 142%. In Calgary, demand for emergency hampers rose another 17% this past year.

The Prime Minister said that Canadians would judge him by the cost at the grocery store. Well, they are. They are lining up at food banks. This is not about inflation; it is about a government that has lost control of affordability, employment and, in the end, human dignity.

When will the Prime Minister stop grading himself on promises and start delivering real, tangible results for Canadians?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Food Banks Canada does essential work on the front lines, but it also makes recommendations for politicians like us on better policies to support Canadians, so I would put it back on that member.

When we had a vote in this House of Commons not that long ago on a national school food program, he voted against it. Every time we have a policy to support Canadians, such as \$10-a-day child care or dental care, they vote against it. When we bring forward measures to ensure that there is more affordable housing for Canadians, they vote against it.

If the member is going to quote the Food Banks Canada report, please read the report and consider some of the recommendations.

**Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Calgary Herald reports record demand at the Calgary Food Bank as food prices at the grocery store continue to rise faster than inflation and as unemployment approaches 8% in Calgary. The Prime Minister said he would be judged by the cost at the grocery store, and the verdict is a scathing indictment of the Prime Minister's performance.

When will the Prime Minister stop running out-of-control deficits that are driving inflation, unemployment and demand at the food bank?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the last election, Canadians had a clear choice between a leader with economic and business experience versus the leader opposite, who has no economic experience whatsoever.

We are laser-focused on building a strong economy. We are cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians. We are cutting the GST for first-time homebuyers. Interest rates have just dropped, and we are going to build houses at a scale not seen since the Second World War.

It is time for the Conservatives to stop the rhetoric, help us build the strongest economy in the G7, and get on board.

**Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government, Canadians cannot afford groceries. Back home, the Valley Food Bank in Woodstock reports serving twice as many people this time of year compared to last. These increases span every age group, especially seniors. These are our neighbours. They are not just statistics. They are our family members and they are our friends.

Can the Prime Minister tell this House how, on the one hand, he plans on tackling inflation and bringing down grocery costs, while on the other hand he is doubling the nation's deficit? How is that even possible?

**Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every member of this House of Commons cares deeply about the cost of living for Canadians, but there is one difference. On this side, we are bringing forward initiatives and opportunities for real Canadians by building this country. We are going to build big, we are going to build bold and we are going to build now with working Canadians. We are going to create hundreds of thousands of jobs with more opportunities for apprenticeship.

Conservative voters want this. I hope the opposition gets on board.

**Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised Canadians that he would be judged by the cost at grocery stores, yet, in August, food inflation soared 70% higher than the overall inflation. Denise, a senior in Quebec, is now forced to skip meals to survive the crushing cost of living. This is another broken promise from a Prime Minister who has let our seniors down time and time again.

Will the Prime Minister stop doubling the deficit in order to bring down inflation so that seniors do not have to skip their meals?

• (1500)

**Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that I have been hearing the Conservatives complain about food prices, but not hearing one solution, not one idea, nor one iota of support for some of the measures we have taken on this side of the House. Those are empty, hollow words.

My message to the Leader of the Opposition and the Conservative caucus is this: Slogans do not put food on the table.

[Translation]

**Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, no one should go without food. This week the media reported the story of seniors who have to skip meals in order to make ends meet. Unfortunately, that is what a growing number of Canadian households are experiencing, hit hard by food inflation levels twice that of general inflation after 10 years of Liberal rule.

Food banks are no longer meeting demand, and by skipping a meal a day, seniors can cut one last item from their budgets.

Is the Prime Minister aware of the financial insecurity of seniors?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what Quebecers are very aware of is the fact that every day, here in Ottawa, at 2 p.m., the Conservatives grow a conscience. However, when it comes time to vote for measures that directly support seniors, young people and families, that Conservative conscience is nowhere to be found.

When it was time to vote for the Canada child benefit, which reduced child poverty in Canada by 38%, they voted against it. When it was time to vote for an increase to the guaranteed income supplement for the most vulnerable seniors, they voted against it. When it was time to lower the age of retirement, they voted against it.

It is not surprising that Quebecers rejected the Conservative Party and chose a serious government that is capable of growing the economy to protect our social programs.

### Oral Questions

**Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our seniors are suffering in silence from financial insecurity. They are going hungry, too. They are suffering due to exorbitant rents and the unexpected costs of illness.

The Prime Minister cannot even imagine the situation from his ivory tower. Inflation is eating all their savings.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister take action? A Prime Minister has the duty to keep both feet on the ground. The Prime Minister's honeymoon is over now.

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his great performance. We had missed that.

However, I want to mention, as my colleague said, that Conservative theatrics are not putting food on the tables of Canadians, nor are they helping seniors in need across the country.

Quebeckers and Canadians rejected the Conservative approach, which is to cut programs Canadians need. The Conservatives now have the choice to support an ambitious plan to increase Canadians' spending power with tax cuts, including for the middle class, and grow Canada's economic potential.

\* \* \*

### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

**Jake Sawatzky (New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, young Canadians are facing unprecedented challenges that are harmful to their mental health and well-being. Too often, the services they need are fragmented, hard to access and not designed specifically for youth.

Can the Minister of Health tell us what the government is doing to ensure that young Canadians get the mental health care they need?

**Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Young people are the driving force needed to build a strong Canada. One of my priorities is to respond as effectively as possible to mental health and addictions issues among young people, particularly young men. That is why, based on research findings in this area, our government has invested in creating integrated youth service centres, which have opened their doors in Quebec and across the country. We have opened 109 centres across the country, 17 of which are located in my colleague's province of British Columbia.

\* \* \*

● (1505)  
[English]

### HOUSING

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal chaos, the housing market is a mess. Prices are still too high for buyers. Sellers cannot sell, and builders cannot build. The Prime Minister promised change, but it is just another bait and switch. Housing starts have crashed. Preconstruction sales in the GTA have plunged to levels not seen since the global financial crisis. Young people are still un-

able to afford a home in which to live. The Prime Minister's answer is more of the same, another costly housing bureaucracy.

When will the Prime Minister stop building bureaucracy and start building homes?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have news for the member opposite. He needs to check his facts. Housing starts were up in August 2025. They are up 10% over August 2024, so Canadians are building, the interest rate is dropping and the government is committed to the most aggressive affordable housing program in our history.

We will see housing being built in the tens of thousands that is below-market and accessible for all Canadians.

**Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government, we are in a housing crisis. Builders cannot build, and young Canadians are priced out of the market. Now housing starts are down 16%, and a new report shows that Canada is at risk of losing 100,000 housing-related trades jobs. That means that construction workers and tradespeople, like me, will all lose their livelihoods while the government refuses to get shovels in the ground.

Why is the Prime Minister building another costly housing bureaucracy in Ottawa while workers are out of a job?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again the facts speak for themselves. We are seeing housing starts surge in Montreal, where there was a 32% increase this past month. We are seeing it in Vancouver as well. We are seeing housing starts increase in many jurisdictions across the country.

We as a new government are doubling down to make sure we are supporting builders. We are working with provinces, territories and mayors to make sure we are building affordable housing on a scale that was never embraced by the members opposite.

**Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal housing chaos, buyers cannot buy, sellers cannot sell and builders cannot build. My community has an unemployment rate of over 11%. It is the highest in Canada, and now we have one of the highest markets in which to buy a home. A new report states that ownership is only for the very wealthy in Windsor.

When will the Prime Minister stop his empty promises? When will he stop building bureaucracy and start building homes?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will restate the facts. Under the previous Conservative government, housing was completely ignored for a decade. The reinvestment has been building up, and we are taking it to the next level with a \$13-billion investment in affordable housing for Canada. That includes \$1 billion to focus on homelessness and supportive housing in ridings across the country where people cannot access housing. We are going to build like never before.

\* \* \*

#### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Can the Minister of Indigenous Services please update the House on what our new government is doing to advance the goals of reconciliation?

**Hon. Mandy Gull-Masty (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 10th year of the TRC's calls to action. The government has made historic decisions to respond.

In the current government, there has been the appointment of the first indigenous Minister of Indigenous Services so indigenous people can be served by their very own. We also have indigenous voices at the cabinet table, creating space for representation and decision-making.

The Prime Minister has advanced the TRC's foundational request of inclusion and belonging for September 30 and every day after that.

\* \* \*

● (1510)

#### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, farmers love their animals and would do anything to protect them. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is planning to cull 400 ostriches in B.C. because of an outbreak of avian flu.

When it comes to animal safety, Canadians expect due diligence and transparency. They are looking to the government to explain why the cull is necessary, but the Liberal government has not posted a public update in over a month.

Canadians want to know this: Why did the Liberal ministers did not work with the agriculture sector to resolve the issue?

**Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure the member knows that I am working very closely with the Minister of Agriculture. The case is now before the court, so I will not comment more.

\* \* \*

#### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP fought tooth and nail for the \$4-billion investment in the for indige-

nous, by indigenous urban, rural and northern housing strategy, yet two years later, the money still has not flowed. Shovel-ready projects are stalled while the housing crisis for indigenous, Inuit and Métis peoples continues to escalate.

In creating “build Canada homes”, the Prime Minister is admitting that CMHC is ill-equipped to deliver the much-needed affordable homes that Canadians need.

Will the Prime Minister let Indigenous Services take over so it can do what is necessary for indigenous-led housing providers to access the funds to build the homes the community desperately needs?

**Hon. Mandy Gull-Masty (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our home is where we should feel the safest. Many indigenous people live in housing that is overcrowded, contaminated and unaffordable. The new “build Canada homes” program is going to finance indigenous housing providers to grow affordable housing in communities while catalyzing capital for a revolutionary approach to homebuilding in communities at a pace we never saw in the darkest decade of government, the Conservative era.

\* \* \*

#### PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Right Hon. Joe Clark, the 16th prime minister of Canada.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** I also wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Siobhan Coady, Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** I would also draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the finalists of the 2025 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing: Raymond B. Blake, Stephen Maher, the Hon. Jane Philpott, Alasdair Roberts and Tanya Talaga.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

*Business of Supply*

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS OF QUEBEC AND THE PROVINCES

The House resumed from September 23 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:14 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Rivière-du-Nord relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

● (1525)

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

*(Division No. 38)*

**YEAS**

Members

Aboultiaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Berthold
Bexte	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bonin
Bonk	Borrelli
Bragdon	Brassard
Brook	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cobena
Cody	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Davies (Niagara South)
Dawson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
DeRidder	Deschênes
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Goodreau
Guglielmin	Gunn
Hallan	Hardy
Ho	Hoback
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Jivani
Kelly	Khanna
Kibble	Kirkland
Kmieciak	Konanz
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kronis	Kuruc

Lantsman
Lawrence
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lobb
Mahal
Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Martel
McCauley
McLean (Calgary Centre)
Menegakis
Morin
Motz
Nater
Patzer
Perron
Poilievre
Reid
Reynolds
Rood
Rowe
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shipley
Small
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Tochor
Uppal
Vien
Vis
Warkentin
Williamson— 159

Larouche
Lawton
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
Ma
Majumdar
Mantle
Mazier
McKenzie
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ross
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Simard
Steinley
Stevenson
Strauss
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh

**NAYS**

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anandasangaree	Auguste
Bains	Baker
Bardeesy	Battiste
Beech	Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
Bendayan	Bittle
Blair	Blois
Boulerice	Brière
Carney	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Chang
Chartrand	Chatel
Chen	Chenette
Chi	Church
Clark	Connors
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dandurand
Danko	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Deschênes-Thériault	Desrochers
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Earle	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson	Fancy
Fanjoy	Fergus
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Gaheer	Gainey
Gasparro	Gazan



Gerretsen	Gould
Grant	Greaves
Guay	Guilbeault
Gull-Masty	Hajdu
Harrison	Hepfner
Hirtle	Hodgson
Hogan	Housefather
Hussen	Iacono
Idlout	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Joseph	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Klassen	Koutrakis
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)	Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lauzon	Lavack
Lavoie	LeBlanc
Leitão	Lightbound
Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacDonald (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Maloney	May
McGuinty	McKelvie
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McKnight
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	McPherson
Ménard	Mendès
Michel	Miedema
Miller	Mingarelli
Morrissey	Myles
Nathan	Nguyen
Noormohamed	Ntumba
Oliphant	Olzewski
O'Rourke	Osborne
Petipas Taylor	Powlowski
Provost	Ramsay
Rana	Robertson
Rochefort	Romanado
Royer	Sahota
Saini	Sarai
Sawatzky	Schiefke
Sgro	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sodhi	Solomon
Sousa	St-Pierre
Sudds	Tesser Derksen
Thompson	Turnbull
Valdez	van Koeverden
Vandenbeld	Villeneuve
Watchorn	Weiler
Yip	Zahid
Zerucelli	Zuberi — 170

PAIRED

Members

Anand	Hanley
Jeneroux	Kusie
Lake	Lattanzio
Naqvi	Stubbs
Wilkinson	Zimmer — 10

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

• (1530)

[English]

**Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Many members are still relatively new, but the rules for voting are quite clear. Once the question has been called, members must be in their seat if they are voting in the chamber and must not leave their place.

Routine Proceedings

I believe the member for Bourassa left the chamber and returned before the vote was finished. If his vote was counted by the Clerk, it would have to be taken off because he was not eligible to vote.

**The Speaker:** The first question is whether the member voted electronically or voted in person. When voting in person, a member cannot leave their seat.

The hon. member for Bourassa.

[Translation]

**Abdelhaq Sari:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for your observation. The vote was finished when—

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Abdelhaq Sari:** Mr. Speaker, I will just finish my sentence. The vote was finished.

**The Speaker:** Even if the vote was finished, members must remain in the chamber until the result of the vote is announced.

The hon. member's vote will have to be withdrawn. This does not change the result, clearly.

[English]

I would also like to point out that it is the first time in my experience in the chamber, which has been long, that I have seen props during votes. I want to make sure everyone is aware that it is not permitted.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

**Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I want to rise on the same point of order. Props are not allowed in the House. You just reminded the members of that.

[English]

**The Speaker:** I would like to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 13 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and in accordance with the policy on tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Agreement between Canada and Ukraine on the Mutual Protection of Classified Information”, signed at Brussels on December 3, 2024.

\* \* \*

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following report.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

It is from the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly respecting its participation in the election observation mission in Washington, D.C., and other regions of the United States of America from November 2 to 5, 2024.

\* \* \*

● (1535)

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the third report later this day.

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following three reports of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage: the first report, entitled “Tech Giants’ Intimidation and Subversion Tactics to Evade Regulation in Canada and Globally”; the second report, entitled “Harms Caused by Illegal Sexually Explicit Material Online”; and the third report, entitled “The Holding of a National Forum on the Media”.

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

**Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I wish to respond. We have two dissenting reports.

First, we have a dissenting report with regard to the study on tech giants. On behalf of my Conservative colleagues, I rise to draw attention to the findings in that report on the use of intimidation tactics, along with excessive censorship from the Liberal government.

Through Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, the government has chosen to censor what Canadians can see, say and share online. Bill C-11 makes Ottawa bureaucrats and the government the gatekeepers of the Internet rather than allowing Canadians freedom of choice. Bill C-18 has had equally devastating consequences, taking news off many platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, thus preventing Canadians from being able to access local media.

Conservatives believe in free expression, open access and opportunity for all Canadians, which is why we are calling for both Bill C-11 and Bill C-18 to be repealed and for Canadians to have their freedom restored.

I also have a response to another report, if members will bear with me.

On behalf of my Conservative colleagues, I rise to address the urgent and growing threat of online harms. Canadians, especially women and girls, are increasingly being targeted by non-consensual

intimate images and deepfake technology. These are not abstract issues, but rather forms of violence that cause real and lasting harm. The evidence is clear: 92% of adult cases of non-consensual image distribution involve women, and nearly all deepfake pornography targets women.

Female journalists, politicians and public voices are being harassed and silenced through this type of abuse, yet the government’s so-called online harms legislation, which it introduced in the last Parliament, failed to address these dangers and instead imposed censorship on Canadians. We hope for better in this Parliament.

Conservatives believe in real solutions. We are calling for legislation that criminalizes these acts, modernizes the Criminal Code and puts victims at the very centre. Survivors need protection, support and justice, not empty promises or flawed laws. To that end, my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill has put forward a fantastic private member’s bill, and I hope that we can count on the members of this place to support her.

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

*[Translation]*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** All those opposed to the hon. member’s moving the motion will please say nay.

There being no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

● (1540)

*[English]***PETITIONS**

## MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to rise today to table a petition on behalf of Canadians who are deeply concerned about the worsening mental health and substance use crises across our country, a crisis that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Petitioners note that too many Canadians are unable to access timely mental health or substance use supports. They point out that when care is not available in the community, people are left to rely on overcrowded hospitals and emergency rooms or primary care providers, while untreated or inadequately treated mental illness carries enormous social and economic costs.

Petitioners therefore call on the Government of Canada to take urgent action by legislating parity between physical and mental health in Canada's universal public health care system; ensuring timely access to evidence-based, culturally appropriate, publicly funded mental health and substance use services beyond hospital and physician settings; and establishing the Canada mental health transfer to sustainably fund these services, including an initial investment of \$4.5 billion to the provinces and territories.

Last, petitioners are clear: Canadians deserve a health care system where mental health is treated with the same urgency, priority and respect as physical health.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to present a petition and to voice the concerns of the constituents of Riding Mountain.

The people of Swan River are experiencing an alarming increase in violent crime that has threatened the safety and well-being of families across our region. A recent report by the Manitoba RCMP West District found that, in an 18-month period, just four offenders in Swan River were responsible for 239 offences. Petitioners continue to suffer the consequences of the soft-on-crime Liberal policies, such as Bill C-5, which repealed the mandatory jail time for serious crimes; and Bill C-75, which forces judges to release repeat violent offenders right back onto the streets.

Petitioners in Swan Valley want to see the end of the Liberals' reckless catch-and-release policies and put criminals behind bars. This is why the people of Swan River are demanding jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders. I support the good people of Swan River.

• (1545)

**Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today on behalf of my constituents in Vaughan—Woodbridge to present a petition brought forward by @notonjoeswatch and other members of our community with regard to crime. Like many places in this country, Vaughan has experienced heightened levels of crime. In the York Region, violent crime is up 58%, home invasions are up 82% and carjackings are up 300%.

The petitioners are calling for the Liberal government to immediately repeal Bill C-5, which revoked mandatory minimum penalties for some serious offences, and Bill C-75, which forces judges to apply the principle of restraint for early release on serious offences. Petitioners also call for the introduction of mandatory minimum penalties and a serious offence category.

I support the petitioners. It is time that we get serious on crime. We must do something about the chaos in our streets.

#### GAZA

**Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise to table a petition with over 7,500 signatures from people across the country. At the time of the signing of the petition, the petitioners noted that the Israeli government's blockade of food and medicines to Gaza had continued for more than 90 days since its commencement on March 2, 2025; that, according to the food security analysis released on May 12, 2025, by the Integrated Food Security

#### Routine Proceedings

Phase Classification partnership, three-quarters of Gaza's population are currently at emergency or catastrophic food deprivation; that Canada has ratified the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which prohibit the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare; and that the starvation of civilians and other forms of collective punishment are also criminalized by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which Canada ratified on July 7, 2000.

The petitioners are noting that Canada as a country needs to uphold international human rights laws to ensure our reputation as a country is not diminished by Canada's inaction in the face of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute by other nations.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to suspend the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement until the Government of Canada is certain that the Israeli government is no longer acting in violation of international laws with its deliberate blockade and to impose sanctions on all members of the present Israeli government who have publicly expressed their support for the continued blockade.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

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

The first petition comes from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the persecution happening in Turkey, Pakistan and Bahrain. The governments there have committed human rights violations against thousands of Turkish people, including eight Turkish Canadians. The petitioners are concerned about the over 300,000 wrongfully detained people and that several human rights organizations have committed gross human rights violations.

The folks who have signed this petition want the Government of Canada to closely monitor the situation; place sanctions on 12 officials who are responsible for these violations, particularly around the death of Gokhan Acikkollu; and call on the Turkish, Pakistani and Bahraini governments to end the violations against these particular people.

#### FIREARMS

**Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the second petition I have to present comes from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the government's actions against firearms owners. They note that firearms play a big role in Canadian culture and history, and many new Canadians love to participate in the heritage of hunting and sport shooting. They are concerned about the amendments to Bill C-21 seeking to ban hunting rifles.

*Routine Proceedings*

Therefore, the folks who have signed this petition ask the government to leave their guns alone, repeal Bill C-21, and defend and safeguard the property rights of Canadians.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the last petition I have to present today comes from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the MAID regime. The lack of services or treatments makes it so that MAID is not a real choice. The petitioners are concerned that medical assistance in dying for those with disabilities or chronic illnesses devalues their lives and tacitly endorses the notion that a life with disability is not worth living.

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

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present to the House today.

The first petition comes from people in my riding, particularly those connected with Elk Island Catholic Schools, who are raising concern about changes in federal funding around Jordan's principle. They note that first nations children living off-reserve are no longer eligible to receive funding through Jordan's principle at the federal level, per the most recent operational bulletin, which states, "Supports to school boards off-reserve and private schools will be redirected to provincial school boards, or other existing provincial and federally-funded programs."

Students who accessed funding in previous years to support psycho-educational assessment, educational assistants and program support are no longer eligible to receive these supports, and this means a significant loss of support for Elk Island Catholic off-reserve first nation students. The petitioners contend that the decision to remove these supports is discriminatory to those students who have benefited from Jordan's principle and is out of line with the intent of the principle itself.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to review and approve provincial education supports through Jordan's principle to students living off-reserve.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is related to the worsening human rights situation in North Korea. The petitioners note many grave violations of human rights in this petition, including prioritization of food distribution to those considered useful to the survival of the current political systems, with those deemed expendable facing deprivation, and a vast security apparatus associated with all kinds of oppression, public execution, forced imprisonment of citizens in political prison camps, terrorizing the population into submission, the state-sponsored abduction of citizens of other nations, etc.

Further, the petitioners raise concern about how the People's Republic of China has disregarded or ignored recommendations from

the UN Commission of Inquiry regarding North Korean defectors and other issues, including not sending people back to North Korea, as well as allowing the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations full access to North Korean defectors and other supports that are important for those who have fled North Korea.

The petitioners, therefore, call on the Government of Canada to take action in regard to these human rights abuses and to table regular reports in Parliament on the situation of human rights in North Korea, including the state of political prison camps and correctional labour camps. They call on the government to provide updates on the status and challenges faced by North Korean defectors in China and elsewhere and ask that Canadian policies toward North Korean defectors provide support to those defectors and refugee claimants.

They want to see Canada engage actively with international organizations and foreign governments to press the PRC to allow safe passage for North Korean refugees to South Korea, where they are recognized as citizens, and to establish initiatives to support the promotion of human rights in North Korea and aid defectors without specifying a particular legislative structure. The measures can include monitoring and reporting on human rights in North Korea, supporting North Korean defectors in other regions, developing strategies for Canada to assist in protecting North Korean citizens from crimes against humanity and supporting international efforts to safeguard the people of North Korea from crimes against humanity and promote political freedom, including through dialogue with relevant organizations and governments.

I thank members of the Canadian Korean community, who worked hard on bringing this petition to the attention of the House.

● (1550)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition deals with the issue of euthanasia and, in particular, highlights concerns that have been raised by those living with disabilities. The petitioners are very concerned that in the context of a lack of available services and treatments for people in various situations, euthanasia does not present itself as a real choice but is offered in the absence of alternative kinds of supports.

The petitioners argue that allowing medical assistance in dying for those with disabilities or chronic illness devalues their lives, tacitly endorsing the idea that life with disability is optional and by extension dispensable.

The petitioners are concerned about us having an ableist health care system where the lives of those with disabilities are seen as not worth living. They note that many disability advocates in Canada have expressed opposition to the expansions contained in the government's previous bill, Bill C-7.

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

• (1555)

#### FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is in support of Bill C-257. This is what the petition says, although I will note that it is from the last Parliament. It is a bill I had tabled to add political belief or activity as prohibited grounds of discrimination to the Human Rights Act.

The petition notes that Canadians have a right to be protected against discrimination and that it is a fundamental right to be politically active and vocal. Furthermore, it is in the best interests of Canadian democracy that we protect the free exchange of ideas and do not allow a situation in which people are punished by their employers for presenting political opinions or engaging in political activity their employer does not agree with.

The petitioners want to see the House support Bill C-257, as it previously existed, and defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

#### HAZARAS

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling draws attention to past and ongoing abuses of human rights targeting the Hazara community in Afghanistan. The petitioners cite some of the history around the various genocides that have affected the Hazara people in Afghanistan and further describe more recent abuses. They also note the close tie between Canada and Afghanistan, shaped by the sacrifice made by many brave Canadian soldiers in fighting for the freedom of that country, as well as the resources that were invested. The petitioners are deeply concerned about the present situation facing the Hazara people under the Taliban occupation of that country.

The ask in this particular petition includes recognizing the past genocides of the Hazaras and designating September 25 as Hazara genocide memorial day.

\* \* \*

#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

#### Government Orders

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

#### MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

#### COMBATTING HATE CRIME

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, today we begin debate on the combatting hate bill, which would offer additional protections to communities of people across this country that have been the subject of unjust actions of hate, not just toward them as individuals but also toward entire communities.

One of the great promises of Canada is the right of its citizens to live freely, regardless of the colour of their skin, the God they pray to, their gender identity or the person they love. Sadly, too many Canadians are routinely robbed of these freedoms, not necessarily by operation of law but too often by virtue of the actions of hate by their fellow Canadians against them. The prevalence of hate crimes in this country is astounding. It can be disheartening to read day after day in the newspapers of the horrific actions our fellow Canadians are subjected to.

Over the course of my remarks, I hope to cover a number of things, including a canvas of the prevalence of hate crimes in this country and an assessment of the measures we need to adopt, specifically including criminal justice reform. I intend to discuss some of the proposed legislative measures we intend to take to address hate crimes in this country and to encourage members to support the important piece of legislation that is before us.

[Translation]

Today, we begin debate on a very important bill to combat hate across the country. It is important that Canadians are able to live their lives freely without being harassed because of their religion or identity. Unfortunately, many people do not have that freedom because of hate crimes that are committed in their communities.

*Government Orders**[English]*

It is important we understand the scale of what we have observed in Canada's recent history. Nearly 5,000 hate crimes are officially reported by law enforcement annually in this country. We know, through conversations with affected communities, that the true number is much, much higher. The under-reporting of hate crimes is in and of itself a symptom of a societal problem: that people may not have faith that the criminal law is actually equipped to deal with the circumstances they face so routinely in their communities.

It troubles me greatly when I open the newspapers and see such stories. When I meet with Jewish Canadians, they tell me that they are beginning to question whether they have a place in this country, as a result of the hate they have been subjected to. I think about what I have witnessed in my own community, with local police laying charges for the advocating of genocide toward Jewish Canadians. Recently in my home province of Nova Scotia, synagogues have been desecrated with hate symbols that seek to intimidate people of the Jewish faith against practising their religion. The National Holocaust Monument has been desecrated. Is there no limit to indecency?

There are many communities that are impacted. I think about Muslim Canadians, who are suffering from a wave of Islamophobia that we must address. I have met with people and visited their mosques, people who have told me what it is like to be harassed in their communities and told me about the fear they have when they seek to gather and pray.

Sadly, the instances of hate are not limited to simple harassment, behaviour that may inspire fear; it can become deadly. It was only a few years ago that there were horrific shootings in Quebec that claimed the lives of innocent people at a mosque. There have been van attacks in London, Ontario, which, again, took the lives of innocent Canadians by virtue of their being who they were.

I think about the horrific anti-Black racism that takes place too often in this country. In my own community, it is a point of pride that we have shifted our conversation from the days of Viola Desmond's courageously taking a stand at the Roseland Theatre to protect the rights of Black Canadians to be treated equally before the law. We gathered with pride to commemorate her induction as a person of national historic significance to this country. However, the honours we bestow upon her, the commitment to take action in the face of such courage, has to be worth more than the \$10 bill on which her face appears.

There is a cognitive dissonance that takes place when we celebrate victories over racism of the past but in the same town see instances of hate, including a young Black man being shot with a nail gun by a co-worker on a job site. I sat with the mother of a young man who suffered such a fate. I understand the impact it has on the entire family, questioning whether their move from another part of the world was a good decision.

Look at the instances of hate we saw in Vancouver during the pandemic against Asian Canadians, with a 300% increase in vandalism, graffiti and violent hate crimes taking place. We need to take action.

There is, routinely, vandalism of gurdwaras and temples. This is completely unacceptable, and the impact is so human. It is one thing to see in the news a violent crime committed against the queer community on campus at Waterloo, a stabbing that has taken place in a gender studies class, but the real impact, when we actually talk to people, is that they are concerned about whether they have the ability to walk freely through the streets holding the hand of their loved one.

We have a decision to make: Are we going to witness hate, offer our thoughts and prayers and move on with our day, or are we going to take action to actually correct some of the horrific behaviours?

If we wish to build a stronger Canada, we need to adopt a whole-of-society approach to this challenging issue. This will involve different levels of government, including provinces' investing in education that will ensure that people, from a young age, understand that hate is not acceptable in our communities. It will include investments in training law enforcement, prosecutors and judges to see hate and to call it out as such when they witness it in our courtrooms. Of course, part of the puzzle will involve changes to our criminal law to ensure that we punish bad actors and send a signal to ensure that hate does not continue to foment in our communities.

• (1600)

*[Translation]*

Bringing about change within society will not happen without investing in education, providing training for those working in the legal system and overhauling the justice system.

*[English]*

It is in this vein on criminal justice reform that I wish to discuss certain specific measures that are included in the combatting hate bill. The conversation follows upon the recent federal election campaign, where we made a commitment to do more to protect the ability of communities of faith to practise their religion day to day in our country.

In particular, we campaigned on commitments to advance new criminal offences when it comes to the obstruction and intimidation of people who seek to access their religious institutions. Too often, people do not feel safe to practise their religion and to visit their churches, synagogues, mosques or temples. Too often, community centres and schools that have been built for specific communities of interest in this country are targeted by those who wish harm upon the people who use them.

*Government Orders*

These new criminal offences would create the conditions for a safer experience for Canadians from different communities of faith. By ensuring that we protect against the obstruction of those who wish to gather with their community in prayer, we have the ability to allow them to live more freely as Canadians in this country. By criminalizing the deliberate intimidation of those who seek to practise their religion, we have the ability to create a culture of safety, acceptance and inclusion, which I know most Canadians support.

When I talked to people throughout the course of the development of this legislation, one thing was made eminently clear to me. Instances of hate are not limited to the doorsteps of our religious institutions. They can be observed in our streets, in our parks and on our campuses. They can be found in almost every facet of our community. We have decided to move forward with an additional offence, the crime of hate. We intend to have this new offence operate by attaching itself to any criminal activity that takes place in this country where the motivation of the crime was hatred toward an identifiable group of people.

Members can imagine that assault under any circumstances should be condemned not only by the government but by Canadians writ large. Members can imagine as well, I am sure, that the degree of moral culpability is much higher when the target of a particular assault has been targeted because of the colour of their skin, their particular community of faith or their sexual orientation.

We intend to move forward with this offence to offer protections to people who are being harassed by virtue of the community to which they belong when they seek to study in our universities. We intend to use this offence to ensure that the police have the ability to prevent people from being targeted for robberies, assaults and crimes more broadly.

We also intend to move forward with a fourth offence. We intend to criminalize the wilful promotion of hate through the use of hate symbols. It is important that we acknowledge that the wilful promotion of hatred may exist in the Criminal Code already, but when we speak to communities that have been targeted, we understand that the harm that falls upon the community may be greater when a particular tool is used.

This is not the only instance in the Criminal Code where we have adopted such an approach. Of course, the crime of assault exists, but we recognize that assault with a firearm carries a more serious penalty and a higher degree of culpability. Similarly, we recognize that while the wilful promotion of hatred is illegal in this country, the commission of such a crime with the use of a hate symbol, and the impact it has on a community more broadly, is worth specifically addressing through a new criminal offence.

It is important to understand that as we move forward with these offences, we recognize that the impact of hate crimes is not simply felt by the individual victim. The impact reverberates through the entirety of a community and tears, indeed, at the seams of the social fabric of the nation. By addressing these important reforms, we have the opportunity to build a safer Canada.

• (1605)

[Translation]

It is very important to clarify these new offences. When I began this conversation, I first looked at the commitments we made during the last election campaign, including commitments about offences related to intimidation and obstruction. Many people are unable to live their lives freely because some individuals who hate entire groups commit offences to prevent them from using their places of worship. That is unacceptable. These new offences related to intimidating a person and impeding access to a place of worship will allow people to practise their religion across the country.

When I consulted with the public to advance this legislation, one thing became clear. Hate does not only exist around places of worship. It is in parks, on streets, on campuses and in the broader community. That is why we are creating a new hate offence, in addition to the other offences that already exist.

The government must recognize that, when people are victims of other offences, they suffer more when hatred is the motive. Furthermore, the victims themselves are not the only ones affected; communities are too.

The bill sets out a fourth offence, that of the wilful promotion of hatred. An offence already exists, but, in my opinion, we must ensure we enforce it, including when it comes to hate symbols. The repercussions on our communities are greater.

• (1610)

[English]

It is essential that we take the time to listen to the communities that have been impacted by hate and adopt laws that will better protect them.

In addition to creating these two new offences, there are certain other measures we are moving forward with that would make it easier for law enforcement to actually lay charges when they see instances of hate in our communities. In particular, we are moving forward with two specific changes. The first would codify the Supreme Court of Canada's definition of hatred to ensure that there is clarity in the law for our officers to enforce with certainty. The second would remove the requirement that hate crimes may only be prosecuted after the consent of the provincial Attorney General has been received.

In my view, hate crimes should not be subject to a political assessment but instead subject to the independent ability of law enforcement to determine where hate exists in their communities and to take action where they deem necessary.

[Translation]

We must listen to communities that are experiencing the impact of hatred. In addition to new offences, we will establish new ways for police to enforce these offences under the Criminal Code.

*Government Orders*

We are making two changes: codifying in the Criminal Code the definition of hatred, as defined by the Supreme Court of Canada. I also want to remove the requirement for a provincial attorney general to review the police assessment. It is extremely important to remove politics from the conversation. If we have the opportunity to create a culture of safety, acceptance and inclusion, I think that we have the obligation to bring forward new rules.

[English]

It is also important to realize that there will continue to be acts of hate that take place in this country that may not reach a criminal threshold. I fear that, too often, we, as Canadians, are failing our neighbours. We should seek to be better neighbours. We are responsible, in my view, not only for the acts that we ourselves commit, but for the injustices that we see and accept through our acquiescence and through our inaction. When we see instances of hate in our community, we have a duty to condemn them, to speak up and to show support for our fellow Canadians. It should not be too much to ask that our neighbours take care of one another. Should we adopt that approach, we will collectively be better off.

I believe so sincerely in a Canada where people are free to live their lives, free of considerations for the consequences of hate that may befall them and their communities. I believe in a Canada where Canadians should be free to celebrate their culture, to practise their faith, to be who they are and to celebrate their very identity.

[Translation]

We have the opportunity to create a country based on inclusivity, on acceptance of diversity, a country that celebrates people from different communities. Diversity enriches our country.

It is not enough to offer thoughts after a hate-related incident in our community.

[English]

It is not enough when we see incidents of hate time and time again, to offer our thoughts and prayers, and to move on with our lives, knowing that our decision not to take action will foment hate and allow it to continue in our communities.

I believe in a Canada where we have equality and justice and where we celebrate our diversity. I believe this legislation will bring us a little closer to that version of Canada, but we cannot simply offer those thoughts and prayers. We must take action.

Those of us who have been invested with the extraordinary ability to bring our community's voice to Ottawa have an obligation to act. We have been empowered, through the ability to cast a vote in support of legislation in this House of Commons, to stand up for our communities and take a stand against hate. I implore every member of this House to vote in favour of the legislation so we may take action to protect Canadians in our communities.

I believe in a Canada where we will read about hate crimes not in our newspapers, but in our history books. It is only when people have the ability to live freely, to practice their faith, to be with the person they love and to be included regardless of the immutable characteristics with which we are born, that we will have achieved freedom for all. That is the great promise of this country.

I urge every member of the House to support this legislation and make it a reality.

• (1615)

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the minister talked about the codification of the term “hatred”. I believe his explanation was that it was a codification from the Supreme Court of Canada.

I am sure the minister recognizes that the decision we are both talking about is a decision known as *Regina v. Keegstra*. In *Regina v. Keegstra*, a leading decision on the definition of hatred from the Supreme Court of Canada, hatred can be defined as extreme detestation and extreme vilification, which is not the language that is used in Bill C-9.

Why did the minister and his department see fit to lower the legal threshold?

**Hon. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the conversations we have shared not only on this matter but on a series of different areas of criminal justice reform in recent days.

I think it is important to understand what we are seeking to achieve. We are not seeking to criminalize people who may dislike one another. We are not seeking to protect people from being offended or hearing something that they do not like. We are seeking to protect Canadians against criminal activity that would advance the detestation or vilification of an entire class of Canadians based on characteristics that define who they are.

To the extent that members have questions about the very specific definitions that they wish to debate further in this House, I invite them to place their concerns on the floor. I invite them to adopt the legislation so we may actually discuss, with the benefit of expert testimony at committee, what potential amendments may improve this bill to offer protections to communities.

I will take suggestions in good faith. I do not seek to dig in with a version of the bill that cannot be amended. I want to work with members of the House to ensure we prevent this vilification of people on the basis of who they are.

[Translation]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, while we are on the topic of making suggestions in good faith, I am not sure whether this was an accidental or deliberate oversight by the minister and his team, but unfortunately this bill does not remove the religious exemption for hate speech. It is currently possible to publicly engage in hate speech in the name of religion, and we think that is completely absurd. We introduced a bill to fix this during the last Parliament. I had the opportunity to sponsor it.

Is the minister open to adding this item to the bill if we were to propose an amendment?



**Hon. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, first, allow me to thank my colleague for his question and for giving me the opportunity to practise my French.

During my conversations with visible minority groups, many people told me that the reforms set out in this bill need to be implemented.

Some people made suggestions similar to the one the member just raised. I heard stories about religious leaders using the religious exemption in court. In my view, that does not come from a place of good faith.

I would like to make a suggestion. If members of the Bloc Québécois or the other parties would like to have a conversation, taking into account the expert testimony heard in committee, and if a majority of members vote in favour of adding these measures, I would have no objection to that. It is very important that we work with all members of the House to come up with a bill that protects the community.

In my opinion, the best thing would be if a majority of members from all parties supported this bill.

[English]

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, to my hon. colleague, I know his intentions are good, but I am with the hon. member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations. I do not think the Liberals have lowered in this bill the definition of hatred; they have just made it impenetrable. I do not understand why, when we already have so many strong pieces of legislation within the Criminal Code and against hate crimes elsewhere, they decided to change the definition of hatred to mean “the emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike.” It does not make sense to add new legislation where it is not needed and make it more confusing.

• (1620)

**Hon. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, the questioner knows the affection I have for her as a friend and the respect I have for her as a parliamentary colleague. With enormous respect, my goal here is to offer protections to Canadians who do not see themselves reflected in the hate crimes included in Canada's Criminal Code today. We see too often that people are able to commit heinous acts with impunity against their fellow Canadians who come from particular community groups. As I have said in my response to previous questioners, my real hope is that we can collaborate to advance reforms that will offer protections to Canadians without compromising the ability of others to express themselves freely. I will work in good faith with members on all sides of the aisle in order to implement the kinds of reforms that will help keep our neighbours safe.

**Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for the phenomenal presentation.

I am a young, brown, Muslim woman who represents my constituents in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills. The amount of hate that I and my colleagues who are similar to me, women in professional atmospheres, face on a regular basis is oftentimes devastating and hurtful to our functioning as individual citizens and as members of Parliament.

### *Government Orders*

Maybe the minister can help us by clarifying how Bill C-9 would help support women, especially those of colour, to continue to give back to Canada and build our communities stronger.

**Hon. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, I want to share a reflection about the parliamentary work of my colleague. She has been an inspiration to me for many years. I remember what she was subjected to when she had the courage to move forward with what was then Motion No. 103 to deal with Islamophobia in this country. Though I was proud to support it, I was so disappointed with the reaction from some corners of society toward someone who was seeking to make Canada a safer place for all.

This piece of legislation would ensure that a person, no matter what characteristic they are being discriminated for, will have protections through Canada's criminal law as they go about their lives on a day-to-day basis. In particular, for any crime in Canada, if we can identify the motivation of hatred behind it, we would have the opportunity for people to participate freely in their communities, women and women of colour as well, to ensure they will not be subjected to hate without a perpetrator being subjected to criminal law.

**Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, to follow up on the concern articulated by the shadow minister, it was open for the government to lean on the subsequent definition in Whatcott, where the Supreme Court defined “hatred”. I cannot help but notice that the words “extreme manifestations” are missing from the proposed definition in Bill C-9.

To add to that, I have a further concern that I hope the Attorney General can address for us. The legislation seeks to remove the provincial Attorney General's consent to the laying of hate charges, which may in itself be explainable. However, the Attorney General's consent would also catch private prosecutions, which we know are a process where informants lay charges before a provincial magistrate. The consent there would also not be required, opening the process to vexatious litigants. I wonder if the Attorney General is concerned about that.

**Hon. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague has raised two questions.

With respect to the first, by way of summary, we engaged directly with law enforcement who asked for simple definitions that would offer clarity to them and help them in enforcing the criminal law when it comes to hate crimes in this country.

On the second issue, which engages the topic of the requirement that exists today that the Attorney General consent to these charges being laid, or in the member's circumstance, private prosecutions, it is my view that the law would be better left to be enforced by those who have independence from political considerations. When we see that there is a political layer on top of the assessment of law enforcement, we can foresee a set of circumstances where a person in the future, though I do not believe this to be the case with any of my provincial colleagues today, may seek to use their political judgment to not allow a charge to move forward. I think that would have devastating consequences.

*Government Orders*

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I applaud the minister's open-mindedness. In response to a question earlier, he indicated that he was open to reviewing in committee the exemption granted to religious groups when it comes to hate symbols. I would like him to repeat his position, just to be sure.

What I understood from the minister is that he is open to a discussion in committee to see whether the exemption for hate symbols could be removed. I do not believe that any hate symbols should be tolerated based on religious principles.

Did I understand correctly what the minister said earlier?

**Hon. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, my position on this exemption is that there is now an obligation to demonstrate good faith. I do not think it is in good faith for someone to use the exemption to avoid responsibility for a criminal offence.

I am open to that. If the majority of the committee members vote to change the exemption based on the testimony they hear, I am open to that change.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** 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 St. Albert—Sturgeon River, Ethics; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Employment; the hon. member for York—Durham, Housing.

[*English*]

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have couple of housekeeping matters to address. I seek consent from the House to be able to split my time.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Larry Brock:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues, and I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix.

It is always a pleasure to rise and speak on behalf of the incredible residents who put me in this incredible position to represent them in the House of Commons. Today, I rise to speak to this government bill, Bill C-9, the combatting hate act.

Let me begin where I think all of us in the House can agree. We support the objective of protecting vulnerable communities from the rising levels of hate and extremism that we see literally daily in this country. We support giving police and prosecutors the tools they need to keep Canadians safe from coast to coast in their homes, in their schools, in their places of worship and in community spaces. However, the bill itself is flawed in its current form. It cannot go ahead as the Liberals have drafted it, and it is my duty today to explain why.

First, we need to talk about timing. Where was this legislation almost two years ago? We are about to approach the anniversary of the October 7 massacre in Israel. Where was this government in terms of advancing legislation? Literally overnight, we saw an ex-

pansion of hatred directed towards Jewish people. It was not just in large cities; it penetrated the entire country. Jewish Canadians were targeted in their communities. Students were harassed simply for going to school. Synagogues across this country were being shot at and firebombed on a regular basis and had to increase their level of security. Where was the Liberal government to address these criminal acts? Where were the Liberals as Islamophobia rose in Canada, when mosques were threatened and Muslim families felt unsafe simply walking in their neighbourhood?

Let us not forget that there is absolutely zero reference to Christianity. Christianity is under attack in this country.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Larry Brock:** Madam Speaker, I do not know what was funny about Christianity being under attack, but nevertheless, Christian churches have been burned at an alarming rate. Between May 2021 and December 2023, thirty-three Christian churches were burned in this country, with the vast majority being arson-based.

For years, communities cried out for protection. What they got instead from their federal Liberal government was silence. Now, years late, the government has tabled a bill that, quite frankly, feels more like a political gesture than a serious plan.

Make no mistake, the numbers are alarming. Since 2015, police-reported hate crimes in Canada have increased by 258%. Anti-Semitic hate crimes alone are up 416%. Hate crimes against South Asians have risen by almost 380%. In 2024 alone, Canada saw almost 5,000 police-reported hate crimes, the highest number on record. In Toronto alone, hate crime occurrences jumped by 19% in a single year, with assault-related hate crimes rising by 42%.

These numbers are not just statistics. They represent real Canadians, our neighbours, our friends, our co-workers and our children, who all deserve confidence in knowing they are safe and secure. This is why Conservatives have been abundantly clear that we support stronger protections, but supporting that objective does not mean rubber-stamping a flawed piece of legislation.

What are the problems with Bill C-9?

The bill, as drafted, is vague and broad. Civil liberty organizations across Canada have already raised the alarm. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has warned that the intimidation and obstruction provisions risk capturing peaceful protest and legitimate dissent.

• (1630)

The BC Civil Liberties Association said the same. The poorly drafted language could criminalize demonstrations even when they are peaceful and lawful. These are independent organizations dedicated to protecting charter rights, and they are telling us loudly that Bill C-9 risks going too far.

We have heard, by way of questioning of the minister, that there would be removal of Attorney General consent for hate propaganda charges. Police officers and prosecutors I have spoken with view that consent as an important safeguard, a so-called safety valve that ensures that these powerful tools are not misused.

In response to a question from my colleague from York Centre, the minister, in my view, minimized the potential consequential impact of removing Attorney General consent from private prosecutions. His response was that they want to remove political influence. As a former member of the attorney general's office in the province of Ontario, I am rather offended by that, because he is indicating that my boss at that time, the provincial attorney general, was highly political, and that his consent or her consent to continuing a prosecution was made depending on what political affiliation he or she belonged to. That is nonsense, absolute nonsense. It is a safety valve that has been in place for some significant time. It is not an onerous requirement and it ensures that legitimate charges are prosecuted as laid by the police.

More importantly, the requirement for consent would limit and almost completely eliminate overzealous litigants, private litigants, who feel, for whatever reason, that they want to lay a private complaint against another individual for comments that they deem to be offensive in the circumstances. It provides a very important safeguard.

The third problem I identify is the definition of hatred, and I have raised this issue already with the minister.

Bill C-9, as drafted, as the government indicates and as the minister just indicated, would codify the definition of hatred found in the Supreme Court of Canada as “detestation or vilification”. On its face, this seems consistent, but by removing the word “extreme” from the definition as defined by learned justices in the Supreme Court of Canada, the government has lowered the legal threshold, enabling police to lay a multitude of charges at a lower level of inspection and investigation, which, in my view, could open up the floodgates for litigation. That is a concern.

When they codify, they should be using the exact same words as the Supreme Court of Canada. The risk is that speech that is protected in a free democracy could be swept into a different category as true hate. This is not what Canadians want. It is not what our charter says.

Let me be clear. Conservatives support the goal of keeping Canadians safe from hate-motivated crime. We support police and prosecutors having the tools they need to act. We support ensuring that synagogues, mosques, cultural centres and schools are safe, but we also support protecting civil liberties.

I am going to conclude with the following. Canadians deserve protection from hate. They need to feel safe wherever they may be.

### *Government Orders*

They deserve to live in a country where freedom of speech and peaceful protests are respected. Bill C-9, as drafted, does not get that balance right. It is flawed. It is late. It cannot proceed in its current form.

We support protecting Canadians from threats, intimidation, obstruction and violence, but we will not rubber-stamp a flawed bill. We will stand up for vulnerable communities and for civil liberties. We will push for a law that truly represents and protects Canadians without undermining the freedoms that define us as a country. That is our commitment, that is our responsibility and that is the balance Canadians expect us to strike.

• (1635)

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in consultations for this piece of legislation, we heard from many Jewish organizations. One issue they brought up was that having to have the charge cleared through the Attorney General made it so cumbersome that no charges were ever laid. Although there are currently provisions for hate crimes, although not a stand-alone one like the one the bill would create, they were very rarely enforced, and the community felt oftentimes threatened and intimidated, feeling like they were victims of hate crimes that were never prosecuted in court.

I want to know what my colleague feels about those comments that came from Jewish organizations.

**Larry Brock:** Madam Speaker, I have several responses.

I want to highlight again that obtaining Attorney General consent is not a cumbersome process. There are a number of potential prosecutions and offences currently in the Criminal Code that already require Attorney General consent, so I can lay to rest the issue that it is too time-consuming and would delay a potential prosecution, because it is not reality.

The other issue that the member raises is the issue of whether private prosecutions can be overcome by Attorney General consent, and as I indicated in my speech, that raises the spectre of overzealous litigants simply abusing the process. The act is currently stating that this particular form of hatred needs to be attached to another offence of any other act of Parliament, so that could include our political opponents under the Canada Elections Act. There could be numerous examples where things that are said under the guise of freedom of expression can be determined by a political opponent to be vilifying or to somehow have a detestation element and therefore they want to proceed with the prosecution. That is why we need Attorney General consent.

[Translation]

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, as we have indicated, Bill C-9 has some merit. It needs to be studied at committee.

### *Government Orders*

Earlier, in response to two questions we asked him, the minister told us that he might be prepared to review the religious exemption as part of the study in committee.

Are the Conservatives open to that as well? Are they willing to review the religious exemption granted when hateful symbols are displayed?

• (1640)

[*English*]

**Larry Brock:** Madam Speaker, nothing is off the table.

**Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague brought up the issue of churches being burnt down. We have seen a massive increase in hate attacks across the country since this government took power 10 long years ago. I wonder if my colleague could comment on why it has taken the government so long to act and also on the previous prime minister's comment about burning churches down being fully understandable.

**Larry Brock:** Madam Speaker, I find Justin Trudeau's comments in this House and outside this House with respect to the burning down of Christian churches to be absolutely repulsive. It was a disgusting statement by the head of a G7 country, and in my view, it is emblematic of how this government has vilified Christianity in the House of Commons. Every time a church was burned, we would bring it up in the House of Commons, trying to elicit a response from this government, and there was nothing but crickets on that side, which is disgusting.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am always proud to represent the people of Montmorency—Charlevoix. I travelled around my riding all summer and I met with people. I went on a whistle-stop tour of all of the towns. Obviously, people talked to me about the issues that are on their minds right now, particularly access to housing, grocery prices and inflation. They also talked to me about the feeling of safety we have long enjoyed in Montmorency—Charlevoix, as well as in the rest of Quebec and Canada. We live in a safe country. However, people are noticing that that is gradually changing for the worse.

In my opinion, Bill C-9, which seeks to amend the Criminal Code with regard to hate, is well intentioned, but it must be thoroughly examined. As we consider this bill, I would like to take the time to talk about the reasons why we are where we are today.

I believe we live in an excessively fast-paced society. People have access to information or disinformation in an instant. Quite often, people react very strongly to things they see on social media, such as a photo, a short video or a post. Debates become heated. People take sides and are rooted in their positions. Then they make enemies. Often, it is not just one enemy, but hundreds or even thousands of enemies. A short message on social media can escalate very quickly. Recently, in the United States, there was a video of a woman who took a young boy's baseball from him in a rather surprising interaction. The video was everywhere. The woman was harassed and her life was turned upside down. A small blip on social media can cause a really big stir.

There are a lot of what I call “masked vigilantes” online. These people take to their keyboards under the cover of anonymity, some-

times with fake accounts, sometimes even using real accounts. They feel they have excessive rights, and they take a stand. They try to create chaos online and they like to attract attention with their opinions, but they are not very knowledgeable. These are just angry and aggressive opinions, which social media loves.

I often refer to social media as extreme media. Extremist groups, like social media, are currently designed to activate these relationships, to push them further and make people believe that society is extremely left wing or extremely right wing. Algorithms are designed to show people only what they like, what they give a “like” to, what they watch.

Our phone can even analyze our scroll speed and our eye movements and use them as sources of information. Then it gives us only what we like the most. In fact, our phones are starting to know us better than we know ourselves.

We end up believing that everyone thinks the way we do, when the majority of people are more centrist. We would know that if we took the time to talk to one another.

There is also the notion of friendship. These days, we do not have as many people in our social circle. Everything happens on social media. We have hundreds, even thousands of friends, but very few know us. I think that is a serious problem.

We live in a society that, in my opinion, is very stressful, and there are four well-known stress factors: novelty, unpredictability, lack of control, and damage to self-esteem. When self-esteem is damaged, that causes stress. We live in a world that is extremely stressful.

The last few years have been extremely unpredictable and much has changed. It feels like things are out of control due to everything that is happening, particularly in terms of the cost of living, inflation, housing, and so on. In my region, things have changed a lot, and that is also true elsewhere. When we look at international politics, we wonder whether the world as we know it is collapsing. This is putting significant stress on society. I think that that leads to increasingly extreme positions.

Obviously, the solution is never to go to extremes. I would like to reference a very interesting statistic. Based on what we have seen to date, between 30% and 40% of the content on social media is not created by humans. It is created by artificial intelligence with the aim of getting a reaction. Often, people think they are interacting with a person and they try to convince that person, but they are actually trying to convince a robot, whose main objective is to get them to react. Once again, this creates extreme emotions in people and has a very polarizing effect. Once the snowball starts rolling, people either feel alone or think everyone shares their opinion, when, ultimately, the Internet is just telling people what they want to hear.

I also think that individualism has become a serious issue. It is as though each person has become the centre of their own universe, and people have largely forgotten about collectivism.

• (1645)

The one thing I did a lot this summer when travelling around Montmorency—Charlevoix was talk about history. Quebec and Canada evolved through collaboration and hard work. They did not evolve because people isolated themselves, avoided talking to one other and were in constant disagreement. When the individual is put before the collective good, I think society moves in the wrong direction.

I also think people have a hard time differentiating between news and facts. Social media, even the major news networks, spreads opinions to get a reaction out of people. People think they are facts, when they are actually opinions. Once again, this polarizes society and means that we no longer listen to each other.

Everything moves so fast that we speak before we listen, we form opinions before we know what we are talking about and we condemn people before we even understand the situation. I think that is what society's treatment of hate crimes stems from. In recent years, society seems to have allowed certain companies, or a certain system, to take hold and foment polarization and hatred. I think that today, we have to speak out to protect society.

Obviously freedom of expression is essential, but the way we live together as a society is also extremely important. In my opinion, this should once again be part of the debate. The idea that individual freedom should always come first, that small groups should get to monopolize the public arena to promote their opinions because they believe they have something to say, is something I do not agree with. Our goal should be harmonious coexistence and freedom for the majority. The one should not supersede the other, and we must learn to make them coexist.

Freedom is not synonymous with chaos. Far too often, a person is given the right to express themselves, but they conflate the right to express themselves and report a fact with the ideological right to act however they want, at any cost, without thinking about the consequences.

We must remain logical, pragmatic and thoughtful. Our society must encourage dialogue and listening and support discussion.

Things have gone downhill in recent years and crime has skyrocketed.

Over the past 10 years, since the Liberal government has been in office, violent crime has increased by 55%. Gun crime is up 130%. Extortion is up 330%. Homicides are up 29%. Sexual crime is up 76% and auto theft is up 25%. However, the government looked at all that and decided that what we need is new legislation to deal with the issue of hate.

I believe that we have a serious crime problem and that we should begin by giving our law enforcement agencies a clear definition of public order and providing the support they need to defend that order.

### *Government Orders*

We must not miss the mark, as the government is currently doing with the firearm buyback program, for example. The government is missing the mark with this legislation that is nothing but smoke and mirrors. What we need is police officers who not only keep the peace but also protect the public order.

This firearm buyback program clearly shows that, ultimately, what the government wants is to give itself more power. However, by giving itself more power, it is missing the mark. This is a \$750-million program that the minister himself says will not work. Now they are starting to say that participation will have to be voluntary, when it is not. Going after licensed sport shooters and hunters does not seem like a good option to me.

What could we do with \$750 million? Obviously, we could support our police officers. We could get good border officers, the necessary resources and even technology.

In Montmorency—Charlevoix, some companies make surveillance drones that could be used to monitor our borders more efficiently and prevent the weapons that are often used in hate crimes from entering the country.

Lastly, condemning hate is crucial, and we can all agree on that, but the Liberals have a bad habit of making the law more complex. We should start by supporting our law enforcement agencies, clarifying what public order means, helping our police officers and ensuring that people here in Canada feel safe and supported.

• (1650)

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, which included some pretty interesting parts. He talked about living together as a society. A little later, he mentioned the bill, referring to it as smoke and mirrors.

The bill before us, which seeks to combat hate crimes, is definitely not smoke and mirrors, especially for people living in fear, people who face intimidation when they go to their places of worship, their religious institutions or their schools. These are essential measures to ensure that people can indeed live together in communal harmony and feel safe walking down the street.

I would like to know whether my colleague plans to vote in favour of the bill. Does he intend to work with us in good faith to ensure that it passes?

**Gabriel Hardy:** Madam Speaker, this is a very good point. I was not looking to downplay the realities of victims who have experienced these acts. Rather, I wanted to put forward the idea that we should live in a society where police officers have power, where people understand what public order is, and where people in society in general do not see their own personal opinion as a fact. Each person needs to understand that, if they act in a hateful or aggressive way, there will be consequences. Other people will stand up and say that the individual in question crossed the line and needs to stop.

### *Government Orders*

The laws are there. They exist. We have no problem analyzing them to see how we can improve them. However, I believe that the core of the issue is that we should be giving power to police officers and border officers so they can fix things. This is how we could make it clear that, across the country, in Quebec and Canada, law and order are paramount and personal freedoms and opinions do not take precedence over social norms.

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, we said that we were open to studying this bill in committee in order to amend it. The Bloc Québécois will definitely move amendments to have the religious exemption for hate crimes abolished.

The Minister of Justice has said several times that he is open to this idea. He said it again here in the House. I would like to know whether the Conservatives are prepared to support an amendment to abolish the religious exemption for hate crimes.

• (1655)

**Gabriel Hardy:** Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party is currently reviewing the bill. We will ensure that it truly complements the existing legislation. We are not closed to anything. We are open to discussion, but we believe that this bill needs to go a little further.

Before introducing a whole host of minor details, the government should uphold the existing laws and ensure that they are enforced before going any further.

[English]

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am going to ask my hon. colleague to reflect on the question that was put to me by the Secretary of State for Combating Crime, that the police services that she has spoken to welcome the removal of Attorney General consent.

I would like to know, from the perspective of my colleague, what his impression is in terms of enforcement generally with respect to the existing hate legislation as found in the Criminal Code. In the member's opinion, is it uniformly addressed or are there differences?

[Translation]

**Gabriel Hardy:** Madam Speaker, that is a very good question. I do believe that it is important to respect the process that has already been established and to ensure that our laws and standards are applied. Starting to make changes, such as removing the consent of the Attorney General, overruling or giving more power to the government, does not seem to me to be the short-term solution.

I think that Parliament has been stripped of a great deal of power in recent years. I think it is important to respect what is there, to strengthen it and to support it. Parliament must support legislation in a strong and meaningful way before it starts restructuring it.

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, like many others, Bill C-9 has some good and some not so good elements, but it also neglects certain aspects of the problem that should have been addressed.

Obviously, we in the Bloc Québécois are sensitive to and concerned about the significant increase in hate crimes. Quebec society and Canadian society have changed in recent years, and the multi-

culturalism imposed by the Liberal government has given rise to issues that were much less problematic a few decades ago.

Societies around the world are moving toward some sort of clash of cultures, traditions and religious beliefs, and we are no exception to that. In this context, it is crucial that we agree on a clear definition of what our values are, especially if we want to propose a societal model that is consistent, effective and accepted by everyone. The era of vagueness and wishful thinking is over. Apart from the Bloc Québécois's proposals, particularly with regard to respecting Quebec's choices on the French language and secularism, the government is not proposing anything really comprehensive or useful.

Bill C-9 would set limits on some of the rights and freedoms protected under the charter, including freedom of expression. However, freedom of expression is given free rein in section 319 of the Criminal Code, and despite repeated requests from the Bloc Québécois, including our Bill C-373 in 2024, and despite the popular will of a huge majority of voters, the government does not seem to care. It is still possible in both Quebec and Canada to promote hatred and antisemitism as long as it is done based on a religious text. We think that is absurd.

The government is proposing legislation to regulate actions seeking to promote hatred. As I was saying, we agree. However, what does section 319 of the Criminal Code say? Subsection 319(2) reads:

Every one who, by communicating statements, other than in private conversation, wilfully promotes hatred against any identifiable group is guilty of

- (a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
- (b) an offence punishable on summary conviction.

That is all well and good, but a little further on, subsection (3) of the same section states:

- No person shall be convicted of an offence under subsection (2)
- (a) if he establishes that the statements communicated were true;

Now here is the disturbing part:

- (b) if, in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text;

That means a person who “wilfully promotes hatred against any identifiable group” is allowed to do so under subsection (2) provided that person acted “in good faith” on the basis of “an opinion” or “a belief in a religious text”. I do not know about my colleagues, but that makes no sense to me, to the Bloc Québécois or to the vast majority of people in Rivière-du-Nord and across Quebec.

Subsection (2) talks about promoting hatred. We will now turn our attention to subsection (2.1), a later addition, which states:

Everyone who, by communicating statements, other than in private conversation, wilfully promotes antisemitism by condoning, denying or downplaying the Holocaust

- (a) is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
- (b) is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

The same provisions and sentence are used for both hate crimes and anti-Semitism. What else is there about subsection 2.1 on anti-Semitism? Let us read a bit further.

Subsection 3.1 uses almost identical wording as was used for hate crimes:

No person shall be convicted of an offence under subsection (2.1)

Subsection 2.1 is the one about promoting anti-Semitism.

● (1700)

There is one exception that states that a person cannot be convicted of this offence if the statements communicated were true.

Next, no person shall be convicted of this offence under the following circumstances either:

(b) if, in good faith, they expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text;

It is the same exception, the same text, word for word, in both cases.

That means that, currently, in Quebec and Canada, a person can deliberately promote hatred against a group or promote anti-Semitism if it is done on the basis of a religious text. I do not know who, in the House, thinks this makes sense. Once again, we in the Bloc Québécois think this makes no sense. It is not enough to say it makes no sense, however. Positive solutions must be proposed. That is why we introduced a bill last year, but it did not get enough support to pass.

When the minister told us here that he would be introducing legislation to regulate actions that promote hatred, we were in agreement. However, I do not understand why the government did not go further. Why did it not deal with these two exceptions that do not make any sense? When I speak with colleagues in the House about this issue, almost everyone believes that it makes no sense, yet when it comes time to vote, nobody believes that they need to stand up at the appropriate time. It is rather surprising.

Having said that, there is obviously the question of how to define hatred. It is a complex concept, and I am sure it will continue to be debated in our courts for some time. The current definition in the bill is as follows:

hatred means the emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike.

This definition came about following various decisions handed down by the Supreme Court, which has never actually validated this text. I admit that I would not want to be in the judge's position, having to decide whether someone acted out of hatred, that is, whether they acted based on an emotion that was stronger than disdain or dislike and that involved detestation or vilification. I predict that this matter will wind up before the Supreme Court, since it must be pretty hard to draw conclusions like that based on the testimony that tends to be heard in court. In any case, we need a definition, and we have one. It can always be improved. Perhaps that is something we can work on in committee. Personally, I cannot think of a better definition at this very moment. It seems to me that we will have to work seriously on this particular aspect in the coming weeks or months if we decide to pass Bill C-9 at second reading.

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It is much the same story for hate crimes. I agree that there is a difference between robbing a convenience store for money as opposed to doing it out of hatred for the owner. These situations may need to be treated differently. However, how is a judge going to decide whether the person who robbed the convenience store did so out of hatred, that is, on the basis of an emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike? It makes perfect sense, but it is rather difficult to apply. As I said, we have some serious work to do.

Then there is the issue of restricting access to places of worship. Personally, I am obviously completely opposed to the idea of preventing people from accessing a mosque, a Catholic church, or a Buddhist temple. Regardless of the kind of place it is, I think it is just wrong. We have to reject that. I also think that these are offences that could be dealt with under the current provisions of the Criminal Code and various laws, whether provincial laws or municipal by-laws. Obstructing traffic, paralyzing traffic, or hindering access to public places is prohibited. The bill is looking to make a new provision. There may be some merit to that. I have my doubts. I look forward to hearing from the expert witnesses in committee, if we get there. I always say "if we get there" because I am still not sure whether it is a good idea to refer this bill to committee to be studied.

● (1705)

Since my earliest childhood, I have believed that hatred must be fought. The same holds true for just about everyone in the House. I can guarantee that everyone in the Bloc Québécois shares this view. Hatred must be fought.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, opportunities for hatred or hateful situations have increased significantly over the last decade. This may have even been the case over the last two or three decades, but it has been particularly noticeable in recent years.

I am not against immigration. On the contrary, I believe that immigration enriches a society. The values and religions that other peoples bring from around the world—through their experiences, history and culture—can enrich our society. That is a good thing. However, we need to ensure that people integrate properly. If it becomes a free-for-all, there will be a lot of problems.

In my humble opinion, that is the direction the Liberal government has taken us in recently. It said yes to immigration but did not allocate any budget to integrate newcomers. The provinces found themselves in an impossible financial position, wondering how they would welcome thousands of newcomers.

I understand these invitations are frequently extended as an act of great generosity, since these people are experiencing problems in their home country and need to be taken in. We are generous, especially in Quebec, but no doubt elsewhere as well. We like to help people in need, but they will also need help learning the language and they will need health care, which can be costly.

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Every year, the provinces' budget needs shoot up. They are running deficits because they cannot keep up with the demand for services. A family might arrive with three, four or five children. Good for them. That is great. I love children. I am happy to hold them, tell them stories and take care of them. However, they need schooling. They must go to school. How much does all that cost?

These are major issues the federal government has never wanted to address. It told the provinces to take in newcomers and said how nice it was that they were so kind. The provinces said they wanted to be kind, but they needed help. However, the federal government did not want to help them. If I host a party at a friend's house and I tell him he has to pay for the dinner, he will not be very pleased. That is basically what the federal government has been asking us to do for the past few years.

This massive influx of people that the provinces cannot afford to integrate is causing a clash of values. Our values are not superior to theirs, but they are different. We have to find a way to make it all work. The only way to do that is to secure the necessary budget to have people on the ground working with newcomers. Unfortunately, the federal government, in announcing its generous open-door policy, forgot that there was a cost attached to that. I think we are going to have to look at that more closely.

The purpose of Bill C-9 is to combat hate. It tries to clarify the rights and freedoms we enjoy by saying that we have freedom of expression, but that we cannot say that all Jews should be killed, for example, as we heard a preacher in Montreal say not so long ago. The Attorney General of Quebec did not even want to prosecute that preacher. The Attorney General did not say why he did not want to prosecute him, but we can guess why. Under section 319 of the Criminal Code, which I was reading earlier, it would have been a wasted effort. He would have been prosecuting someone while knowing full well that, in the end, he would be told that the defendant had the right to do it because he was basing his actions on a religious text. That is insane.

Not to compare apples and oranges, but that is more or less what we saw yesterday and today with the Bloc Québécois motion. The motion indicated that the factum submitted by the Attorney General of Canada to the Supreme Court would undermine the protection of our values and who we are. I would remind members that, according to this factum, the notwithstanding clause used by Quebec to justify its Act respecting the laicity of the State was absurd. We were talking about secularism and the French language. I said so in a question to the minister yesterday.

• (1710)

Then there was the issue of small claims court proceedings, where lawyers are not allowed. It is not because lawyers are not nice people. I am a big fan of lawyers; I am one. However, lawyers are expensive. I understand that. When a person starts a legal proceeding to claim \$3,000 from their brother-in-law, it might be a good idea to settle it without bringing in two lawyers at \$300 or \$400 an hour. That makes a lot of sense.

Without the possibility of invoking the notwithstanding clause, however, then lawyers would have to be allowed in small claims courts, which might put people in a tough situation. The notwithstanding clause can be invoked to keep that from happening.

How do we proceed with the secularism law? We welcome immigrants, and we are happy to welcome them. However, we wanted to set up a framework to determine who we are. Obviously, when someone acts like a doormat, they should not be surprised when people wipe their feet on them. We decided to stand tall and be welcoming. We decided to take them under our wing, thank them, welcome them, tell them that we are happy to see them and that we will help them.

However, there is a cost associated with that. There is a financial cost, but there is also the political will needed to adopt the legislative framework needed to welcome newcomers appropriately. What is that framework? It includes legislation on French-language training. We talked about Bill 101 and said we were going to improve it. People need to know that when they come to Quebec, they are not arriving in some sort of no man's land. They are arriving in a society that has existed for a long time and that has its own values, its own social foundations, including the fact that the official language, the common language in Quebec, is French.

Yes, many Quebecers speak and understand English. English speakers will not starve to death; they will still be taken care of. However, when communicating with Quebec authorities, they should do so in French. We think it is important to establish that. It should not be established after the fact. It should be established well in advance, now. People coming to settle in Quebec need to know that.

There is also secularism. In my riding, we respect all religions. People can practise whatever religion they want at home. That is precisely the beauty of the laicity act. It says that all residents, everyone in Quebec, can practise the religion of their choice and believe whatever religious principles suit them. That is what freedom of religion is all about.

In Quebec, maybe more than anywhere else in Canada or the world, we believe that religious freedom is too sacred to allow the state to take up any one religion. We do not try to persuade people that ours is the best. However, we require that people who represent the state do so in a secular way. They cannot wear religious symbols. The state is secular. Citizens can be religious or not; the choice is theirs. Their values are their own, and we respect that.

For that to come about, Quebec had to pass a law: the laicity act. We understand that this legislation may clash with some aspects of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is why the Government of Quebec said it would proceed by using the notwithstanding clause. These are our values. They are important enough that we ask they be respected even if it deviates from principles set out in the charter.

The Liberal government has said that it is challenging this right. It wants us to welcome people from all over the world, treat them generously, care for them, educate them, feed them and clothe them. However, the government says that it does not care about our values. That does not work.



Today in the House, our colleagues from the Conservative Party supported our motion calling on the government to withdraw its factum to the Supreme Court. I thank them for that. However, I am deeply disappointed that our Liberal and NDP colleagues voted against the motion.

This means that in a few weeks or months, Supreme Court justices, who are appointed by the federal government and are obviously not elected, will have to rule on this issue. They will have to tell us whether Quebec and the provinces have the right to use the notwithstanding clause, section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I could talk about this at greater length, but perhaps this is not the right time. However, we know very well that this section was drafted by former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and that it was the compromise without which the charter would not have been adopted. It is not a sovereignist, separatist or Quebec invention. It was Pierre Elliott Trudeau's invention. If a province did not like his charter, at least it had that as a consolation prize. I find it a little strange that it is being taken away from us today.

My time is up. I thank my colleagues, and I look forward to seeing what we can make of Bill C-9 in committee.

• (1715)

**Madeleine Chenette (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages and to the Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am delighted to hear my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord speak with such nuance.

I must admit that there is a great deal of diversity of opinion when it comes to values in my riding of Thérèse-De Blainville, but there is a lot of harmony as well. We need to be careful about what we say. We must not give the impression that all immigrants bring problems.

In a context where we have to talk about such an important subject as hate, can we count on you and the Bloc Québécois to ensure that the debate is constructive and remain focused on the subject? We must not mix up the various bills, because it is confusing for Canadians. The minister opened the door and said that we were prepared to discuss it in committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary not to use the word “you”. Members must address their comments through the Chair, even though I do not participate in the debate.

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Madam Speaker, my colleague's riding, Thérèse-De Blainville, is next to mine. I am quite familiar with the folks who live in her riding, and I can say that she is right. Like my riding, Thérèse-De Blainville has a large immigrant population.

In my riding, there are organizations in Saint-Jérôme that are responsible for integrating newcomers. One that comes to mind is Le Coffret, which does tremendous work. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the people who work for that organization.

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I do not want to give the wrong impression. I do not view immigration as a problem. Immigration does, however, pose a challenge. That is what we are dealing with. In order to tackle this challenge, we need to work together, get appropriate budgets and clearly articulate what our values are. The newcomers will appreciate that as much as the folks welcoming them do.

[English]

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member's speech was excellent. The symbolism section in Bill C-9 specifically prohibits the wilful public display of the Nazi swastika. There are over one million Hindu Canadians in this country, and part of the symbolism associated with that culture and faith is a symbol that closely resembles the swastika.

**An hon. member:** It is the swastika.

**Larry Brock:** Madam Speaker, it is the swastika.

Does my friend feel that this is a glaring error on behalf of the drafters that could lead to unintended consequences and could ultimately lead to criminal charges? I would like to hear his thoughts on that.

[Translation]

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Madam Speaker, it is quite a challenge.

This needs to be clear. That is why I tried to make it clear in my speech that people are free to wear their respective religious symbols. If I walk down the street and cross paths with someone wearing a kippah, I have no problem with that. On the contrary, it sparks my curiosity and makes me want to talk to them and learn more about their beliefs.

What we are saying is that government has no religious preference. If I want Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Catholics, Buddhists and everyone else to feel free and welcome to express their ideas, values and religion, I have to make sure that police officers and judges resist the temptation to pass value judgements and accept these people willingly. That means they cannot wear religious symbols.

I understand that it can be frustrating. It is unfortunate if someone decides that they must wear a religious symbol, even at work because they may have to find another job. I do not know. These are the necessary adjustments that will have to be made.

One thing is certain: The secular state is a critical issue these days as people of every religion arrive here from all over the world.

• (1720)

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on the excellent synopsis he gave. When it comes to immigration, we do not believe that cultural minorities inevitably turn to hate crimes. However, we must be aware that hate inherited from the past is causing tensions today. There are tensions between ethnic groups.

What my colleague seemed to be saying in his speech, which I appreciated, is that the means to resolve interethnic hate should be set out in legislation.

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To that end, I would like my colleague to talk about the exemption that the Bloc is trying to bring in so that hate crimes are not permitted under the guise of religious belief. I would like him to focus on that dimension, since the minister seems open to the possibility of amending his bill in committee.

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Madam Speaker, that is yet another excellent question. Once again, I have to hand it to my colleague and thank him for the question.

I too heard our colleague the Minister of Justice say this afternoon that he would seriously consider our proposals regarding the religious exemption if they were brought forward. That is great to hear.

I just wonder why he did not make those same proposals himself from the beginning. He covered all of the other points that were going to be discussed, but the religious exemption issue never came up. We do not talk about that. I have a hard time understanding why. I imagine that this bill, like many others, was discussed by many different people. I assume that, for all sorts of reasons, they were embarrassed, bothered, uncomfortable to say that the Bloc Québécois had a good idea, and so they did not talk about it.

I thank the minister for his openness. In committee, we will endeavour to tackle this issue head-on, as it is a major one and essential to harmonious coexistence.

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think there are a number of areas where I differ from the member opposite, listening to what he has said today and yesterday.

The question I have for him is this. For an individual of Sikh faith, a part of their faith dictates that they have to wear a turban, and many Sikh do, for example, in the RCMP. Does the Bloc feel that an RCMP officer who is of Sikh faith should be allowed to wear a turban?

[Translation]

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. I am not the one deciding on specific cases today. What do we do about Jewish police officers, Sikh teachers or Muslim judges?

I agree that much work remains to be done. However, just because the challenge is great does not mean we should refuse to take it on. I repeat that, in my opinion, for example, if a Muslim, displaying Muslim religious symbols, is arrested by a Jewish police officer, displaying Jewish religious symbols, they might feel uncomfortable. If they go to court and the presiding judge is displaying Sikh or other symbols, it all creates a difficult climate that affects our ability to live together in society.

As I have stated before, I think the state must be secular and that, yes, at home, in our daily lives with our friends, we can display all the religious preferences we hold. We can show them off. However, people who represent the state should, in my opinion, act in a secular way.

• (1725)

**Gaétan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Rivière-du-Nord. I appreciated his speech.

In the member's view, how will police forces be able to tell when an action is motivated by hate?

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** That is a great question, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying in my speech earlier, the definition of hate is a bit—

I hesitate to say ambiguous because I must admit that, if I were to write this myself, I would not have known where to start. That said, I will repeat the definition: “the emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike”.

That description is rather vague. In terms of enforcement, a decision would have to be made as to whether a particular individual carried out a specific action with hateful intent.

I wish the judges good luck.

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I want to be respectful. My question, specifically, is this. If we look at the turban, it is part of the identity of an individual. Is the member trying to say that, for example, a member of the RCMP should not be allowed to wear a turban? I am very interested in the Bloc's position on that in Canada.

[Translation]

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, it is very similar.

Lawyers who appear in court must wear a robe. Nurses must wear scrubs. There are dress codes for different professions. As for police officers, in my humble opinion, there should be secularism requirements in their dress code.

[English]

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Surrey Newton.

I rise in firm support of Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, not just as legislation, but as a promise this new Liberal government is delivering for Canadians. This is about more than law; it is about dignity, safety and belonging.

We campaigned on protecting vulnerable communities and confronting hate in all its forms, and that commitment demands action. Bill C-9 is our response to the urgent realities many Canadians face each day.

Recent data from Statistics Canada paints a stark picture: Police-reported hate crimes have more than doubled in the last six years. This increase has hit indigenous peoples, Black and racialized communities, religious minorities, 2SLGBTQI+ people, women and persons with disabilities especially hard, but we know the true story is far worse than even that.

Most hate crimes go unreported. Research suggests as many as four in five victims never contact the police. That means the numbers we are seeing are only the tip of the iceberg. Statistics do not capture the everyday fear, disruption and trauma. Behind each file are a person whose life is shaken and a community whose confidence is eroded.

Crimes motivated by hate are particularly corrosive. They do not just harm bodies. They attack identities. Their impacts ripple outward, damaging families' and entire communities' sense of safety and belonging.

Let me offer one powerful example. In 2024, Bais Chaya Mushka Girls Elementary School in Toronto was targeted in three separate shooting attacks. Luckily, no one was harmed, as the shootings occurred at times when the school was empty, but the emotional toll was severe. Students, staff and the broader Jewish community felt their sanctuary violated and their sense of security shattered. In response, every Jewish institution across the greater Toronto area reviewed security plans, training and monitoring. That is not just reaction; that is the cost of hate, even when physical violence is averted.

These attacks remind us that hate does not wait for opportunity. It strikes where people feel safe. It breeds anxiety, forces communities into defensive postures and thins the line between public life and fear. When hate is expressed as intimidation, threats, harassment and targeting of places of worship, the damage is intense. When access to cultural or faith-based spaces is blocked or obstructed, the harm is both symbolic and real.

Victims describe depression, post-traumatic stress and withdrawal from community life. Their routines collapse under the weight of fear. Communities, too, pay a heavy price. Divisions deepen, trust frays and participation wanes. Over time, community bonds weaken, social cohesion unravels and fragmentation spreads.

That is why Bill C-9 matters. In Canada, everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from, should be able to live without fear. This bill answers the calls across the country for stronger protections for religious and cultural spaces, and for communities under threat. It proposes four new criminal offences, each targeted at a distinct danger.

Number one is intimidation or obstruction offences prohibiting those who intimidate or block access to places of worship, schools and community centres. These must be sanctuaries, not targets. The maximum sentence of up to 10 years' imprisonment underscores how seriously we take this issue.

Number two is a hate-motivated offence, allowing any federal offence to carry an enhanced charge when motivated by hatred that is grounded in race, religion, sex or other things. This clearly condemns hate as more than a supplement. It is a central aggravating factor.

● (1730)

Number three is an offence for publicly displaying certain hate or terrorist symbols, deliberately with intent to promote hate. This includes symbols associated with listed terrorist groups and the Nazi *hakenkreuz*. We are not using that word regularly anymore. The

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more popular, commonly used word has become the Nazi "swastika". That is why we need a religious exemption. As mentioned in this House previously, a lot of these symbols are linked to other religions and have a long historical past, so it is really important to communities to reclaim their words as well. The Nazi *hakenkreuz* and the SS bolts are symbols listed in this piece of legislation, but we are explicitly, as mentioned, protecting legitimate uses of these symbols for educational, religious, artistic and journalistic purposes from being caught by this law.

This bill also clarifies the definition of "hatred" using Supreme Court jurisprudence, so police, prosecutors and the public have clear guidance about where lawful expression ends and criminal hate begins. Moreover, Bill C-9 would remove the requirement that the Attorney General must personally consent for hate speech or propaganda charges, a change that gives law enforcement consistency, speed and certainty while retaining prosecutorial oversight.

In closing, this bill is about protecting communities, affirming dignity and sustaining the democratic values we promised to defend. It sends a potent message: Canada will not tolerate hatred, in word or in symbol, in our streets, our schools or our sacred places. This Liberal government campaigned on a promise to confront hate. With Bill C-9, we are acting on that promise. I urge all members to support it swiftly, so its protections may begin without delay.

● (1735)

**Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for my friend.

First, why does the government appear to be diluting the definition of "hatred"? The language the Supreme Court articulated, language that we have been relying on for 35 years, includes the words "extreme manifestations" before the words "detestation and vilification". Why have these been dropped from the definition of "hatred", thereby diluting the definition and lowering the threshold?

Second, is my friend not concerned that while removing the requirement for consent of the Attorney General, informants who lay charges by way of private prosecutions will be able to do so without any checks and balances, potentially politicizing the issue and targeting their political opponents?

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**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Mr. Speaker, my answer to both of those questions is that the definition of “hatred” was not in the Criminal Code. This piece of legislation now defines it, but that does not do away with precedents of the courts. We have a common-law system in this country, and both the precedents of the court system and our Criminal Code are referred to when judges make decisions.

Prosecutorial oversight is still a thing. The majority of other criminal charges are laid by police of jurisdiction, except in provinces that have specifically given the right to Crown counsel to lay those charges. In particular, B.C. is one example. B.C. has a different system. However, Crown counsel are always able to make the decisions based on the evidence before them as to whether they are going to move forward with a charge in a court of law. Therefore, there is oversight.

[Translation]

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as we have already mentioned, we want to retain some flexibility to amend or remove certain provisions of the bill, particularly those that could unreasonably restrict freedom of expression or the right to protest.

Among the provisions currently proposed, the Bloc is particularly concerned about the ones that would criminalize obstructing or interfering with people's access to certain places. We are going to take the time to review all of this, but we wonder whether this offence might conflict with the right to protest.

I would like to know whether the Liberals share our concerns in this regard.

[English]

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Mr. Speaker, in this country, we have many designated places to protest, and when people approach a cultural institution or religious place of worship and choose that to be their place of protest, it not only hurts the sentiments of the worshippers in that place but creates conflict. We have seen that. I have seen it in my own community. It creates divisions within society.

I believe these are measures that many religious and minority groups have been calling for. We have seen a great rise in hate, hate speech, hate violence and hate crimes occurring in our communities. This bill would provide clear guidelines as to what is appropriate and what is not.

**Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just a couple of weeks ago in my riding, a Jewish woman was stabbed while she was shopping in the kosher section of a grocery store. I have been meeting in living rooms with the Jewish community in my riding, and this is a culmination of what is a deplorable increase in anti-Semitism.

I wonder if the secretary of state could reassure my constituents, who are scared to even go out in public, with what this bill would do to improve things for them.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, this piece of legislation would carry very stiff penalties. This crime has been accelerating at a pace that no other has, so it is really important to address it.

I hope all members across the House take this bill seriously and support it and will show the utmost sincerity when studying it in the

committee process so that we can protect Canadians and make sure that incidents like the one the member referred to are a thing of the past. It is very tragic what we are dealing with.

● (1740)

**Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, a vital piece of legislation that would strengthen the Criminal Code to protect Canadians from acts of hatred, intimidation and obstruction in their communities.

The bill introduces amendments to address two urgent areas: first, the intimidation and obstruction of people accessing community spaces and, second, hate-motivated crimes. It would also clarify what constitutes hate and ensure law enforcement can respond quickly and effectively. Too many Canadians feel unsafe because of who they are, how they worship or where they gather. We have seen a rise in anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Sikh hate, anti-Black racism, homophobia and transphobia. These are the realities faced by our neighbours, our families and our communities.

About 5,000 hate crimes were reported to police last year, but we know that most of these incidents are never reported, which means that the true number is far higher. Every one of these crimes is an attack not just on individuals but on the values of equality, dignity and respect that we hold dear as Canadians. Bill C-9 introduces targeted reforms that would give law enforcement agencies the tools they need to act while fully protecting the charter rights that Canadians value, including freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of protest.

The legislation is built on six pillars. The first pillar is a new obstruction offence. It would be illegal to block or interfere with lawful access to spaces such as religious institutions, cultural centres, schools, seniors' residences or cemeteries. No Canadian should face barriers when they are going to pray, taking their child to school or attending a cultural celebration. For example, it would be a crime to block the front of a synagogue to restrict access for worshippers or to set a fire at the entrance of a school. At the same time, peaceful protest remains fully protected. This is not about creating so-called bubble zones. Peaceful protests, chanting or holding signs is allowed. Only intentional obstruction or intimidation would be considered illegal.

The second pillar is a new intimidation offence. This would target behaviour designed to instill fear in people accessing those same spaces. We have seen cases in which masked individuals stood outside mosques or shouted threats at parents outside a religious school. These acts are intimidation, not protest, and they have no place in Canada.

The third pillar is a new hate crime offence. If someone commits any federal offence, whether under the Criminal Code or another law, and they do it out of hatred for a particular group, it would now be treated as a hate crime. This is about making sure hate-motivated actions are met with the seriousness that they deserve. The bill would also make it an offence to publicly display hate or terrorist symbols to promote hatred; it would remove the Attorney General consent required for hate propaganda charges so that police could move more quickly. When someone vandalizes a gurdwara out of hate or waves a Nazi flag at a rally, Canadians expect law enforcement to respond swiftly and decisively. Bill C-9 would ensure that this will happen.

The fourth pillar is to codify the definition of “hatred”. The bill would provide clarity so that police and courts know what is and what is not covered. Hatred means strong dislike or hostility toward a group, going beyond being rude, offensive or hurtful. This clear definition will help make the law fair and consistent across Canada.

● (1745)

The fifth pillar is streamlining hate propaganda charges. Right now, police need the Attorney General's consent before laying such charges. This step often delays justice. With Bill C-9, that barrier is removed, so law enforcement can act faster and communities are better protected.

The sixth pillar is a new prohibition on displaying hate and terror symbols. The new offence is carefully targeted. It applies only when such symbols are displayed with the intent to promote hatred against a particular group. The list of prohibited symbols is narrow and precise: the swastika and other symbols principally used by or associated with terrorist organizations listed under the Criminal Code.

Canadians should know this does not criminalize opinions or ordinary protest symbols; it is about only a small, closed list of hate and terror symbols displayed to promote hatred. This approach ensures the law is both clear and enforceable.

Let me summarize why this legislation is so important. Too many Canadians feel unsafe in their own neighbourhoods, their own schools and their own places of worship. Bill C-9 makes it clear: Canada will not tolerate hate. We will not tolerate intimidation. We will not tolerate symbols of violence and terror being used to spread fear.

At the same time, this bill respects charter rights. Peaceful protest remains lawful. Political expression remains lawful. This is about stopping deliberate acts of hate, not silencing voices.

In my riding of Surrey Newton, I see every day how diversity makes us stronger. People of all backgrounds, whether Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist or many others, and even those who do not practise, live side by side and work together with respect, but I also hear from families who are worried when they see hate crimes on the rise. Parents are anxious about sending their children to school, and seniors are concerned about attending their places of worship. Canadians should never have to live with that fear.

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This legislation equips law enforcement and prosecutors with the tools necessary to respond effectively to intimidation, obstruction, hate crimes and hate propaganda. It protects individuals, strengthens community safety and upholds the values that define Canada. I call on all members of this House to support Bill C-9 and stand with us in protecting the rights, freedoms and safety of all Canadians.

**Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the great concerns we have seen across the country is, as he has noted, the massive increase in anti-Semitism. I noticed he missed the massive increase in hate attacks on Christians, but on the issue of anti-Semitism, we have seen these horrible riots and protests in the streets, with people carrying vile signage saying “from the river to the sea”. We know “from the river to the sea” means the extermination of the Jewish people between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Does the member opposite believe that “from the river to the sea” would be an issue of hate, and would Bill C-9 ban people carrying signs promoting “from the river to the sea”, the extermination of Jewish people in Canada?

● (1750)

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Christians, I did mention places of worship, including churches. I will always keep on making sure that Christians are equally protected under Canadian law.

When it comes to displaying any symbol of hate that is attacking any of those communities I mentioned, whether it is the Jewish, Christian, Sikh, Muslim or Hindu community, it will not be tolerated. This bill would make sure that those symbols of hate are banned as acts of hatred that are offences under the law.

[*Translation*]

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in our view, the offence of intimidation is probably the one that represents a truly important need. Among other things, it will make it easier to crack down on online hate speech.

Does my hon. colleague think that the current provisions on intimidation are sufficient? In his opinion, do police forces and prosecutors need more tools than what is being proposed?

[*English*]

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to online cyberbullying, I have had a discussion with the minister responsible. He will be bringing a bill forward in the House of Commons that would address cyberbullying.

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**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I reflect on the last federal election. We have a newly elected Prime Minister and a government with a full agenda, and it is really quite encouraging to see that not only the Prime Minister, but also the Liberal caucus, has put the whole idea of combatting hate on the agenda by bringing in legislation within six months of being in government. I see that as a positive, especially when I start looking at the stats on the increase in the types of hatred that are out there that is specifically race-based and ethnicity-based. We should all be concerned about that.

Would the member not agree that it is a nice thing to see that eventually this bill will hopefully get to committee and we will be able to get feedback from experts from across the country.

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North always has great interventions. I want to show the hon. member that the minister has clearly said that he is open to those changes.

When it comes to committees, they have their own agendas, and if we get something there to be changed or modified, the minister is willing. I would love to see that happen as a constructive step moving forward.

**Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Would anyone like to come visit the intersection of Sheppard and Bathurst in North York on a Sunday afternoon? Every Sunday, a group of thugs shows up at Sheppard and Bathurst in my riding. Most of the thugs cover their faces, and they chant “intifada”, a violent resistance, in protest of a peaceful rally in one of Canada's most Jewish communities.

Sometimes these thugs have a guy dressed and role-playing as Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of October 7. October 7 was not just one of the worst terrorist attacks in modern history; it sparked global jihad, including here in Canada.

For Canada's Jews, this is a sobering moment. My friends, my neighbours, members of my synagogue and fellow Canadians are scared. Hate crimes against Jewish Canadians have more than quadrupled since the Liberals took office, but never mind the statistics. Two weeks ago, a woman was stabbed for shopping in a kosher section of an Ottawa grocery store. A father wearing a kippah was beat up in front of his children in a Montreal park. The Bais Chaya Mushka school for girls, which is a kilometre from where I live, was shot at three times.

What would Bill C-9 do to address this? It would do nothing, or worse than nothing. If passed in its current form, the Liberal hate bill could be weaponized against every Canadian.

I do not want to hear any lectures from the Liberals about anti-Semitism. I dealt with Soviet anti-Semitism, and I lived in Israel during the first intifada. I remember the suicide bombings of restaurants, hotels, markets and buses. There was deadly mayhem everywhere that was perpetuated by the Islamic Jihad.

What do Canada's Jews get from the Liberal government now? They get Canada's recognition of a terrorist state, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, without preconditions. The

Liberals should not dare lecture me about anti-Jew hate. They were thanked by Hamas not once, not twice, but three times.

There are enough laws on the books to stop this mayhem. It is already illegal to intimidate someone while physically blocking them from entering a facility. Hatred has been defined by the Supreme Court for 35 years, and we have settled on it. However, as we will hear in a moment, the legislation would water down that definition.

To willfully promote terror is to willfully promote hate. Despite the good work of our police heroes, the municipal, provincial and federal governments are refusing to protect Canada's Jewish community.

What do the Liberals propose instead? They come up with Bill C-9, which should concern every member of the Jewish community and every Canadian. The bill would repeal the requirement of the Attorney General's consent to lay hate charges. This could indeed simplify the process and reduce finger pointing, as we now see in Ontario between the Attorney General's office and the police, but the proposed repeal would also apply to private prosecutions. Vexatious informants would try to lay hate charges against political opponents every day, including, conceivably, against some members of this House.

The bill would create a chill on free speech. While the Crown could intervene to stay or withdraw such charges, the Crown might not take a position. Even if the Crown withdrew or stayed the charges, an informant would be able to appeal that by taking it to judicial review. Such persecution would cause distress to the alleged accused and result in legal fees, reputational risks and travel restrictions.

The bill must be amended so that the Attorney General's consent would be required for hate crime prosecutions started from private information.

What the Liberals propose is very dangerous, and I am rightly scared that political and ideological opponents would try to silence each other using criminal proceedings.

Another major concern is that the new stand-alone hate offence would apply to any offence under any act of Parliament, so an offence under the Canada Elections Act or under the Canada Labour Code could attract criminal prosecution. There is a significant risk of overreach, particularly in view of previous concerns regarding private prosecutions.

I got into politics by counting votes and studying elections law.

• (1755)

What if someday someone accuses a scrutineer of suppressing votes because of hate? Could they then be subjected to a criminal prosecution, including a private prosecution? If someone withheld wages contrary to the Canada Labour Code, should that give rise to a criminal prosecution if hate is alleged? We are talking about tackling on a criminal offence to non-criminal conduct. It is scary, and it is not necessary.

Finally, the government is seeking to dilute the definition of “hated” as articulated by the Supreme Court of Canada. I do not understand why the Liberals are looking to lower the threshold for hate speech after 35 years of good common law. In *Keegstra*, the leading case on the definition of hatred, the Supreme Court defined hatred as “connotes emotion of an intense and extreme nature that is clearly associated with vilification and detestation.” In a subsequent case, *Whatcott*, the Supreme Court said that hatred is limited to the “extreme manifestations” of the words “detestation” and “vilification”. However, Bill C-9 defines hatred as “the emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike”.

The codification of hatred in Bill C-9 omits the words “connotes emotion of an intense and extreme nature”. It also omits the *Whatcott* alternative, “extreme manifestations”. Why? The effect is to lower the threshold for the definition of hatred, making it easier to convict of hate speech. This is another attack on free speech by the Liberals. It would not protect Jews or anyone, but it would place every Canadian at a greater risk of criminal prosecution.

This bill would lower the threshold for hate speech, couple criminal prosecutions with non-criminal proceedings, and allow private citizens to swear private hate information and lay hate charges without the consent of the Attorney General. In its present form, this bill is an assault on free speech.

As I said, I am a Canadian Jew. I would like the Liberals to insist on the enforcement of existing laws and not be thanked by Hamas every other month. They should go back and rethink the bill, and not make innocent Canadians fear being in legal jeopardy.

• (1800)

**John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the issue of overzealous litigants, that is something I personally identify with as a former municipal councillor, having been the subject of several what I considered to be frivolous and vexatious complaints, using the process as a political tool. However, the proposed act is very clear that the Crown would still have oversight of charges that would move forward.

My question for the member is this: Why does he not have confidence in the professionalism of the courts and the Crowns to move forward appropriately when there are serious allegations of hate?

**Roman Baber:** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to clarify. There is no question that our capable and professional Crowns are able to intervene in private prosecutions and stay or withdraw the charges. The problem is that, at times, a Crown may take a non-position. However, even if it would be appropriate to stay or withdraw, and the Crown did take that position and charges were stayed or withdrawn, an informant would be able to appeal to a judicial review,

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which means that the alleged accused would be subject to legal fees, reputational risks and travel restrictions. One of the common questions when we travel is “Have you ever been subject to criminal proceedings or ever been arrested?”

Regrettably, even if the Crown exercises its due diligence, there is still the prospect of continuous prosecution, putting Canadians' well-being at risk.

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, we have heard from several speakers from the government side that Jewish groups are absolutely supportive and in favour of the full content of Bill C-9. I would like to find out this from my colleague: As a proud Jewish resident in his community, has he heard from any other Jewish groups that offer a different view?

**Roman Baber:** Mr. Speaker, since Friday, I have been in regular communication with various Jewish community groups, and essentially all of them have expressed one reservation or another about some of the contents of this bill, which I articulated earlier. The private prosecution concern is top of mind. One of the leading organizations, in fact, is generally concerned with respect to the removal of the AG's consent.

At the end of the day, I think we would all agree it is important that we stick to the letter of the law when it comes to the codification of the word “hatred”. I do not understand why the government is intent on diluting 35 years of good Supreme Court common law. I urge it to go back and redraft that section.

• (1805)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, whether it is the Conservative shadow minister or the member who just spoke, I have a concern after listening to what they had to say. I believe they oppose the legislation, and I hope that does not mean they are going to prevent it from ultimately going to committee.

Does the member believe there is an opportunity for the Conservatives to support allowing the legislation to at least go to committee? The minister himself has indicated that he is very much open to working with members to tune it.

**Roman Baber:** Mr. Speaker, I have very serious concerns about the legislation in its current form. We see a serious assault on free speech by virtue of the dilution of the definition of “hatred” and by allowing private prosecutions for hate charges to proceed without Attorney General consent. I am very concerned about essentially non-criminal statutes with prescribed offences being coupled with an allegation of hate, as it could result in criminal proceedings.

This is a very problematic bill the Liberals have brought forward.

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**Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians believe in a country where everyone can speak freely, worship freely and live without fear. I believe that all hon. members of the House agree that no one should face threats because of their race, their faith or who they love, yet today, Canadians are confronting an alarming reality. The police tell us that hate crimes have risen sharply since the Liberals came to power, up 258% nationwide since 2015. Within that increase, anti-Semitic hate crimes have jumped 416%, and hate crimes against South Asians are up 377%. Last year alone, police reported a staggering 4,882 hate crimes across Canada, and the number of police-reported hate crimes have increased for six years in a row.

These numbers are real and are deeply troubling. I agree with the minister that the government must act, but we must separate the goal from the method. Legislating against hate is welcome if it minimally impairs free speech and actually makes our communities safer. However, legislation without enforcement is like a lock without a key. It has potential to be useful, but it is far from effective.

I share the minister's concern for the deterioration of civil discourse in our society and for the victims of hate-motivated crime. The Criminal Code already makes it illegal to utter threats, incite violence or harass someone because of who they are. It contains offences related to mischief, to blocking infrastructure and to property damage. These provisions are clear, court-tested and strong. The problem is that police are too often instructed to just keep the peace instead of enforcing the law. When hate crimes are poorly enforced, victims and witnesses often feel like reporting these incidents is futile.

If authorities fail to investigate thoroughly, prosecute offenders or take clear action, people lose faith in the system. This lack of accountability leaves victims feeling isolated, unsafe and skeptical that their experiences will be taken seriously. Over time, communities become less willing to come forward, allowing bias-motivated behaviour to persist unchecked. Weak enforcement therefore not only undermines justice for individual victims but erodes public confidence in the rule of law.

When offenders avoid meaningful consequences, they are emboldened to push boundaries, disrupt the peace and exploit loopholes, and that is what I fear will happen with this legislation. For example, this legislation refers to places of worship but makes no mention of the predominantly ethnic neighbourhoods, hospitals and other settings that have also been settings for protests. They hold significant risk of leading to violence with hateful things being said. There is a significant risk that with this bill, protesting mobs would simply move back into residential neighbourhoods, where they invite escalation and confrontation and instill real fear in families, seniors and children.

Our justice system remains a revolving door thanks to Bill C-75 and Bill C-5. Charges are dropped or pleaded down, trials are delayed and sentences are inconsistent. This bill would do nothing to change that. While the government keeps promising that reform to bail and sentencing is coming, we have yet to see it in this House. People deserve to feel safe in their homes, and they will not without enforcement of the laws currently on the books. New offences are only meaningful if they are clear, enforceable and consistently applied. This bill needs work to pass that test.

• (1810)

While the government claims that the definition of hatred in this legislation simply codifies the language from case law, in fact the definition as articulated sets a materially lower standard. Hatred is defined in the bill as “the emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike”. That is a confusing mouthful.

The minister himself has admitted that the application of this law will be fact-dependent. That means that both law enforcement and ordinary Canadians will have to do some guessing in the moment as to what might be interpreted as a crime. Detestation and vilification are crimes, but disdain and dislike are a part of free speech. One thing I think all of us in the House know is that one person's disdain is another person's detestation, and one person's dislike certainly feels like vilification to others.

In the case law, the standard was higher, requiring the emotion of hatred to be intense and extreme in nature, the extreme manifestation of the sentiment of hate, and far beyond dislike, disdain and simple offensiveness. I fear that the bill, as drafted, will become more fodder for accusations on social media, vexatious complaints to police and aggression between groups.

History warns us about where lowering the standard for hate speech can lead. Laws meant to stop hatred have been turned against political dissenters and minority voices. We should not give the state broader powers to police thought or symbolism without first trying to make our existing tools against hatred more effective.

Like all hon. members in the House, I reject hate in all its forms. Every Canadian deserves to feel safe at home, in their place of worship and on the street, but safety will not come solely from criminalizing symbols or speech. Safety comes from making sure that when someone assaults another person, threatens a synagogue or vandalizes a mosque, the police investigate and make arrests and the court holds a fair trial and enforces the sentence.



The bill removes the Attorney General's oversight before a hate propaganda charge proceeds. That step has provided an important safeguard against politicization and misuse, especially in the case of private prosecutions. Eliminating it without providing another way to prevent vexatious prosecutions leaves the door wide open to the weaponization of this bill.

Right now, our biggest problem is that enforcement is not consistent. Bail is virtually automatic, and charges are often dropped. Serious charges are plead down. That is where Parliament's attention should be: on stronger enforcement, on swifter prosecutions and on support for victims. Unamended, this bill risks punishing the unpopular while the truly dangerous slip through. While I agree wholeheartedly that rising hate crimes demand action, this bill feels more like a Liberal press release than it does like real protection.

Conservatives believe in limited government, in the rule of law and in freedom of expression, even for speech we find offensive. We believe that what is illegal must be clear and tied to real harm, not to subjective feelings of detestation or vilification, however painful they may be to hear. The right response to hateful ideas is not more censorship. It is more debate, more truth and more courage from citizens willing to challenge hate in the open.

If the government wants to protect Canadians, it should start by enforcing the strong laws we already have. Make sure threats, assaults and property crimes motivated by hate are investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the Criminal Code. Give police the resources they need. Support victims, but do not lightly hand the state new powers to decide which ideas may be expressed.

● (1815)

**Vince Gasparro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and the hon. member for York Centre know I have a great deal of respect for both of them. I have been to Bathurst and Sheppard, as they well know. I have seen those individuals waving Hezbollah flags intentionally to intimidate the members of their Jewish community and my Jewish community who go to those rallies.

I know for a fact that Canadian Women Against Antisemitism supports some of the measures in this bill. The Toronto Police Service has told me it supports some of the measures in this bill.

The hon. member talks about enforcement. That is a provincial issue, not a federal issue. Does she agree that, for the federal government to combat hate, this legislation does go a long way with a lot of the stakeholder groups?

**Tamara Kronis:** Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank the hon. member for everything he has done to support his community and our communities. He has really shown care. I am personally grateful for that.

When it comes down to whether or not we need new laws, we are only going to find that out when we make a sincere effort to enforce the ones we already have. Yes, that will involve working with our provincial counterparts. I think there is a lot of work to do with respect to signal and tone from the government in that. If it truly wants to protect Canadians, it is going to need to focus on resources for police, support for victims and a consistent application of the Criminal Code.

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There is a lot the federal government can do to support our law enforcement. We need to make sure that when someone assaults another person, threatens a synagogue or vandalizes a mosque—

[*Translation*]

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

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that my Conservative colleagues have some concerns about this bill, including with respect to freedom of expression and the right to protest.

To us, the new provision criminalizing the act of obstructing or even interfering with people's access to a place is somewhat more concerning. Obviously we will look into this more and work on the bill in committee.

However, I would like to know whether the Conservatives think this offence interferes with the right to protest. Are they also concerned that this may infringe on the right to protest?

● (1820)

[*English*]

**Tamara Kronis:** Mr. Speaker, I think that is a good question.

Part of the challenge with this legislation is that it leads to legislative whack-a-mole when we start talking about different locations. I fear that it really will drive people back into residential neighbourhoods. Then we will be constantly trying to chase these protests around to different locations. We have had these protests in so many different locations. I think we need to focus on the activities as opposed to the places.

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a lawyer and a former adjudicator, I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on the differing standards of proof. We have the extreme vilification versus the lower standard in Bill C-9. Knowing that our courts are overburdened with cases right now, with Jordan delays being commonplace across Canada, does she feel this confusing threshold will increase the amount of litigation in our criminal courts?

**Tamara Kronis:** Mr. Speaker, I think that is a really important point.

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One of the real struggles, particularly in the last couple of years, has been for people who are experiencing extreme examples of hatred and violence in their communities and on the streets. We have had a lot of instances where people stand on one side of the street and yell at people on the other side of the street with law enforcement in between. One of the real challenges in all of this is that it is hard to lay charges in public prosecutions. It is very difficult in the moment to find witnesses and be able to ascertain what actually happened, especially with people shrieking. There are often allegations on both sides and lots of cellphone video footage. I think it is going to be chaos.

**John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

It is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, a bill that represents more than just legislative reform. It reflects our Liberal government's commitment to protecting all Canadians from intimidation, harassment and the very real threat of hate in their communities. The legislation embodies our values as a society and recognizes that when people are afraid to attend their places of worship, schools or cultural centres, the very fabric of our communities is under attack.

We are witnessing a troubling increase in hate across Canada, with Jewish Canadians receiving a disproportionately high amount of hate, along with Muslim, queer and racialized communities across this country. In Hamilton, Jewish Canadians account for less than 1% of the general population but are subject to over 80% of religious-based hate crimes, highlighting the urgent need for targeted protections.

I want to thank the Hamilton Jewish Federation and the Sri Radha Krishna Temple, and their communities, for their valuable input and advocacy in shaping the legislation, and, of course, thank the broader Hamilton Jewish and Hindu communities for their valuable input. I also want to extend my gratitude to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety for their leadership and commitment to addressing hate in all its forms. In particular I would like to recognize the Minister of Public Safety, who visited Hamilton earlier this year to visit with the Hamilton Jewish community, Jewish leaders and Hamilton police.

Recent data from Statistics Canada shows that police-reported hate crimes have more than doubled in the past six years, rising by 169%. This is not just a statistic; it represents families that fear sending their children to school, communities that fear gathering to celebrate or pray, and individuals whose very identities are being targeted. There have been physical assaults and harassment in places of worship, targeted shootings at religious schools, and attacks and bomb threats directed at synagogues, mosques, temples, churches, schools and community centres. In response to these alarming developments, there have been calls from across the country for stronger protections.

Bill C-9 would respond to these calls by introducing new offences to criminalize intimidation and obstruction, enhancing the legal framework for prosecuting hate crimes and addressing the promotion of hatred through symbols associated with terrorism and hate. The bill would introduce a new intimidation offence, which

would make it illegal to provoke fear in another person to impede their access to a place of worship, a school or a cultural centre that is primarily used by an identifiable group. Likewise, the bill would introduce a complementary obstruction offence, which would target conduct that intentionally blocks or interferes with lawful access to these spaces.

Both offences would carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. It is important to emphasize that these offences would not target peaceful expression or assembly. They would specifically target morally reprehensible criminal behaviours directed against individuals trying to access spaces that are essential to their identity and their community. This is about protecting Canadians from harm, not reducing their rights to protest or to express themselves peacefully.

Another critical provision of the combatting hate bill is the new introduction of a hate crime offence. This offence would apply to any federal offence motivated by hatred based on grounds such as race, ethnicity, religion or sex. By explicitly addressing crimes motivated by hate, the provision would ensure that these acts are clearly condemned and appropriately punished. The offence is structured to allow the Crown to proceed in summary conviction in less serious cases, while escalating penalties for more serious offences. For example, someone convicted of uttering threats under this provision would face a maximum of 10 years in prison if it was for hate-motivated reasons, compared to five years under the current law.

In addition, Bill C-9 would introduce a new hate propaganda offence to criminalize the intentional public display of symbols associated with hate or terrorism for the purpose of promoting hatred against an identifiable group. This includes symbols such as the Nazi swastika, the SS bolts and symbols principally used by or associated with terrorist entities listed in the Criminal Code, such as Hamas and Hezbollah.

• (1825)

I want to stress that this offence is carefully tailored. It does not criminalize symbols displayed for legitimate purposes, such as education, journalism or the arts. This ensures that freedom of expression is respected, while giving law enforcement and prosecutors a clear tool to respond to criminally motivated hate.

To further enhance clarity and consistency, the bill codifies the definition of “hatred” in the Criminal Code, based on Supreme Court jurisprudence, focusing on detestation or vilification. It does not include mere disdain or dislike. Codifying this definition ensures that Canadians, law enforcement and the courts have a clear understanding of what constitutes hate in law. This provision is specifically critical to assist police to determine when arrests are warranted and to remove interpretation and ambiguity that may be present with the current laws.

Finally, Bill C-9 proposes to remove the requirement for the Attorney General's consent to prosecute certain hate propaganda offences and the new offences, while safeguards remain through the discretion of the Crown prosecution, which assesses the reasonable prospect of conviction and public interest before proceeding with charges.

This bill is about taking action when action is needed. When Canadians fear walking into their synagogue, mosque, church or school, we must act. When individuals are attacked because of who they are, we must act. When speech is used to promote hatred and violence, we must act. With Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, we are taking action. We are acting to protect our communities, defend the fundamental values of our country and affirm that Canada is a country that says no to hate and yes to safety and dignity for everyone.

I will acknowledge that it is unfortunate that this legislation is necessary. It is a direct response to the growing and targeted hatred across Canada, but, of course, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is fundamental to our government. Freedom of expression, freedom of association and the right to protest are cornerstone Canadian values, but no one has the right to promote hate.

Municipalities across Canada, including Hamilton, where I was formerly a city councillor, are already moving forward with municipal by-laws similar to what is intended here, but instead of forcing municipalities and provinces to have a patchwork of individual by-laws to combat the hatred they are seeing in their communities, we are taking action at the federal level to set national standards.

I call on all parliamentarians to support this bill and to work together to ensure that it passes promptly. This is an important step in fulfilling our Liberal government's commitment to strengthen community safety and uphold the fundamental rights of Canadians.

In my conversations with residents across Hamilton who have been subject to hate, it is absolutely heartbreaking to hear the stories of intimidation and hatred that they have faced in their communities. In particular, I want to thank representatives from the Hamilton Jewish Federation for sharing their stories with me, being frank and forward and sharing exactly what it is like to be a member of their community in the city of Hamilton when there are incidents of hate.

Again, I recognize that it is unfortunate that we have to proceed with this legislation, but in consultation with those groups directly affected and also in consultation with law enforcement, we have no doubt that this is the appropriate action at this time.

### *Government Orders*

• (1830)

**Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since 2015, police-reported hate crimes are up 258% across Canada, anti-Semitic hate crimes are up 416%, and hate crimes against south Asians are up 377%. We have also seen well over 100 churches burned down.

It would seem to me that there has been a general lack of enforcing the law but also making sure that people who commit these crimes actually go to jail and stay in jail.

Does the member not agree that it would have been better to reform bail now, as opposed to doing something like this when there are already existing elements to the Criminal Code that criminalize hate propaganda, threats, intimidation and obstruction?

**John-Paul Danko:** Mr. Speaker, I think in these areas there is quite a bit of agreement between our government and the opposition. Going back to the purpose of the legislation and the consultation in the community, the purpose is to make sure all individuals have access to the community spaces central to their identity, to clarify the legal meaning of hatred within the Criminal Code so it takes away some of that ambiguity or discretion that may be in current law and preserve the lawful right to protest under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There is definitely a balance there.

Of course, we are moving forward with federal legislation to reform bail and federal sentencing, and I welcome further discussion on that when that legislation comes forward.

[Translation]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today, during his speech on his own bill, the Minister of Justice indicated, in response to one of our questions, that he would be open to an amendment on the religious exemption. Let us not forget that, in the last Parliament, the Bloc Québécois introduced a bill to abolish that exemption in section 319 of the Criminal Code. That provision currently allows individuals to engage in hate speech without being arrested, provided the speech is based on religious text. We think that is completely absurd. If I understand correctly, the minister is open to such an amendment.

My question is the following. Given that the Liberals already know our position on this exemption, can my colleague explain to me why we are waiting for an amendment to be proposed when the provision could have already been included in the bill?

[English]

**John-Paul Danko:** Mr. Speaker, this is an area where I personally have quite a bit of agreement with my colleagues in the Bloc. I personally have issues when religious texts are used at times as a justification for hatred against LGBTQ and queer communities in particular. However, we are trying to reach a balance between freedom of expression and making sure the targeted hate we are seeing in communities is addressed.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Once again, this legislation is supported by municipalities, the local Jewish and Hindu communities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. We welcome further discussion in committee.

• (1835)

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to quickly get in two questions for the member about this legislation.

First, has the government engaged with the Hindu community and other communities that use symbols that look like symbols that have an association, in other contexts, with hate but are used in a very different way in their tradition? We want to protect the freedoms of those communities that understand similar looking symbols in very different ways.

Second, I wonder if the member can comment on the significant violence we have seen targeting the Christian community, the burning of churches, and what the government's response, or lack of response, has been to the number of churches that have been vandalized or completely destroyed during the Liberals' tenure in office.

**John-Paul Danko:** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is fundamental to our government, including the freedom of expression, freedom of association and the right to peaceful protest. However, when that extends to hatred, when that extends to specifically targeting identifiable groups for any reason, it is completely inappropriate.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to address the chamber. Here we have before us a really important issue. The issue of racism and hatred is very much real and has been for many years. Over the last number of years, for different reasons, we have seen the escalation of hatred. This is something that all of us should be concerned about. There are reports of crimes motivated by hatred; I was provided a graph that really highlights the issue. The one that is most concerning is race and ethnicity; we are talking about huge increases over recent years. Religion is the second one, followed by sexual orientation. There are other forms but those are the three big ones.

Just this last summer, I had the opportunity to sit with some young people from the Sikh community over at the Singh Sabha temple on Sturgeon in Winnipeg. I listened to their thoughts on the issue. The purpose was to talk about racism and hatred. Some of the things that were discussed, I found very beneficial. I think, at the end of the day, there needs to be more dialogue on the issue. Hatred and racism are two things I have zero tolerance for.

As a legislature, I would like us to look at things we could do to ultimately minimize what takes place in our community that is so hurtful in many different ways. There are real people at the other end who are victims, who suffer virtually every day of the year as a direct result.

In the last federal election, the Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians. He indicated that he would bring in anti-hate legislation. That is what we are debating today, Bill C-9, the combatting hate act. I think that, overall, it has been fairly well received by Canadians.

The Minister of Justice and the Attorney General was very clear earlier today. In presenting the legislation, he indicated that he is very much open to possible amendments, the sorts of amendments the opposition might have, to give strength and to deal with concerns that opposition parties might have. I say that because I believe that even the Conservative voters in the last federal election wanted to see all political parties work more co-operatively in order to pass good legislation.

If there are things we can do together at the committee stage, in order to pass this legislation, I believe we should do them. The Attorney General has made it very clear that he has an open mind in regard to amendments.

We can look at what the minister has said and what the Prime Minister said in the last election, as an election platform, making that commitment. Not only do we have a government that is prepared to work co-operatively with opposition parties, we also have a mandate to bring in the legislation. I would suggest that the two combined should be enough of an incentive for members to, at the very least, allow the bill to get to committee stage, so that we can hear first-hand what stakeholders and Canadians have to say.

If there are issues or concerns, by all means, members should bring them up. If there are amendments, let us see what they have to say. The shadow minister from the Conservative Party expressed concern about the AG consent. I see the AG consent as a bit of a barrier that could potentially delay the laying of charges.

• (1840)

I do not see the issue with what the Conservatives have raised on this. I really do not see it, even in private prosecutions. I do not quite understand what would cause them to raise the concern that they do not have the same level of confidence that we do in government with respect to law enforcement and our judicial system. I believe that a very high threshold has been established. I have appreciation, respect and confidence in our system to ensure that the law is utilized for the betterment of our communities.

Someone suggested it would cause more action in the courts. Hopefully, it will. I want to see charges being laid. I want to see convictions. I believe this legislation would open the door to making our communities better and safer.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

## ETHICS

**Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to follow up on a question that I posed to the government in May relating to the Prime Minister's financial holdings, potential conflicts of interest and his total lack of transparency concerning these matters.

At the time, the Prime Minister was hiding behind an ethics loophole in Canada's ethics laws by hiding his assets from public disclosure. Finally, in July, the Prime Minister's ethics disclosure was quietly released. Canadians deserve to have the assurance that policy decisions made by the Prime Minister in no way further his private interests. From that standpoint, the Prime Minister's ethics disclosure is completely inadequate insofar as it provides a vague outline of the Prime Minister's financial interests, but not the full and complete picture.

More specifically, the Prime Minister continues to hide the full extent of his financial interests in the trillion-dollar investment firm Brookfield Asset Management, for which he served not only as board chair but also as head of transition investing. The National Post reported that, during the time the Prime Minister served as Brookfield's head of transition investing, he coled efforts to raise capital for two very large clean energy funds: the global transition fund and the second global transition fund. He was also involved in raising funds for a third Brookfield investment fund shortly before he ran for the leadership of the Liberal Party to become the Prime Minister of Canada.

Why does that matter? Very simply, it is because, according to the Prime Minister's ethics disclosure, he is entitled to carried interest payments from these funds, which are potentially worth tens of millions of dollars. To be clear, carried interest payments are essentially bonus pay based upon the performance of these investment funds. What is completely lacking from the Prime Minister's ethics disclosures is which companies the Prime Minister's performance pay is tied to.

The Prime Minister will say there is nothing to see and everything is on the up and up because he has set up a blind trust, but I ask what good a blind trust is when the Prime Minister knows the companies that these funds are invested in and, therefore, knows which public policy decisions may impact upon their profitability, which, in turn, is tied directly to the value of the Prime Minister's future performance pay. When the Prime Minister talks about a blind trust, it is not the Prime Minister who is blind. It is Canadians who are blind. It is Canadians who are left in the dark in respect of a multitude of potential conflicts of interest involving the Prime Minister in such public policy areas as transport, finance, energy and infrastructure.

Canadians deserve transparency. The Prime Minister needs to come clean and disclose the full extent of his financial interests in Brookfield Asset Management, including the many companies to which tens of millions of dollars of his future performance pay—

• (1845)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting the way the Conservative Party, over the last number of years, always tends to deal with the Prime Minister or cabinet ministers. At the end of the day, we have a wonderful opportunity on the floor of the House of Commons to debate ideas and policies, to take a look at what the government is or is not doing and so forth. It is a fantastic opportunity that I would argue is in the public interest. However, the member wants to talk about the Prime Minister and his financial interests.

We have an Ethics Commissioner who is ultimately responsible for specific requirements that were established by parliamentarians. The Conservative Party is not responsible for this. It is the same process that Stephen Harper had to go through, and the Prime Minister is in compliance with the Ethics Commissioner. Now we have a Conservative Party that, over the years, pushed all that to the side, because they are more concerned with character assassination. I have always suggested this in the past. They are trying to take a look at the character of an individual and do whatever it takes in order to portray that person in a very negative light. The member even made reference to it in his comments. It is in a blind trust, which was the obligation.

The leader of the Liberal Party, the Prime Minister of Canada, has an incredible history as a former governor of the Bank of Canada, a former governor of the Bank of England, an economist and one who managed many corporations. Let us contrast that with the history of the leader of the Conservative Party. Well, he has been a politician, but I do not know if there is anything else. Maybe in rebuttal, the member can actually talk a little more about it.

The bottom line is that, yes, the Prime Minister had a life outside being a parliamentarian. As a result, because he was very successful in terms of economics and managing his portfolio, he has built up and put things into a blind trust, which is in compliance with the Ethics Commissioner's requirements. At the end of the day, after doing this, his focus, as it should be, is on serving Canadians.

The policy decisions that are being made deal with the types of actions that are absolutely necessary in order to advance the best interests of Canadians as a whole. Examples of that would be a tax break for 22 million Canadians and, for young people who are trying to get a home, getting rid of the GST on the purchase of new homes. This is not to mention building one Canadian economy and all the efforts, discussions, meetings and consultations, whether it is with premiers, indigenous people and the stakeholders that are out there in order to ensure that we get that. I could also mention legislation, whether it is the hate bill we were talking about a few minutes ago or the commitment to bring in bail reform legislation this fall. We have a busy Prime Minister, but all that some members of the opposition want to do is attack his character.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1850)

**Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, that is nonsense. The Prime Minister, in his capacity as head of transition funding at Brookfield, raised capital of \$27 billion for three funds. He hand-picked the companies; therefore, he knows what public policy decisions may ultimately impact the value of his future performance pay, which is tied to these funds.

Canadians deserve transparency, and they deserve disclosure. I am simply asking for the Prime Minister to be transparent, to come clean and to disclose all of his financial interests. Why will he not do that?

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, like prime ministers before him, the Prime Minister has put things into blind trusts and is being transparent.

I am trying to provide some sense of accountability and transparency, in terms of the motivation of the Conservative Party of Canada and why its members continually attack personalities as opposed to dealing with substantial public policy. That is what I find quite unfortunate.

We should actually be encouraging individuals from all sectors of society to engage in politics and not have to worry about having their character assassinated if they are actually put into a position where they are making substantive policy decisions. However, if that is the member's sole interest, then he should put in an application to become Canada's next Ethics Commissioner.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals are desperate to defend their jobs, my question tonight is about the jobs of the many unemployed Canadians who are desperately looking for jobs and cannot find them.

We have a serious unemployment crisis in this country that is particularly affecting young Canadians. The unemployment rate has been continuously going up over the last three years. It has now hit 7.1%, but the youth unemployment rate is really at catastrophic levels, at 14.5%. Many young people are desperately looking for jobs and are unable to find them.

This is a continuation of a trend that has been going on for the last three years. We have been regularly highlighting the problem of the jobs crisis and calling on the government to have a plan of some kind and present a plan. In particular, as part of that plan, it should reverse some of the policies it has put in place that have led us to this point.

Under the current government, things have gotten so much more difficult when it comes to investing, building a business, growing a business and employing Canadians. Many barriers have been put in place that block economic development. We have seen this especially in the area of natural resource development, but in other areas as well.

The government has continuously put roadblocks in place that have undermined the competitiveness of our economy. The result of that is that it is harder to start and grow a business, and therefore fewer jobs are being created. When it comes to addressing this un-

employment crisis, a critical priority needs to be removing the barriers that prevent economic development and unleashing economic opportunity.

A second area where we see major problems in the government's policy is immigration. It has allowed, in particular, temporary migration to get completely out of control. Even within the intended parameters, there has been rampant abuse of the temporary foreign worker program. We have inland asylum claimants who are forced to wait years and years before their claims are evaluated. I have dealt with instances of fake college acceptance letters being used as a tool for immigration. Sometimes students have been deceived by unscrupulous consultants, and the students thought they were coming to study somewhere here when they were not.

There has been a lack of enforcement, a lack of administrative competence and a lack of prudence when it comes to immigration. This has led to an unprecedented spike in temporary migration, and it is affecting youth employment numbers.

We also continue to see a failure of the government to recognize the importance of ensuring that training aligns with the needs of our labour market. The Conservatives have emphasized the value and dignity of all work. We have celebrated work in the trades and the natural resource sector, and we have encouraged policies, such as increases in funding for UTIP, that align training investments with the needs of the labour market.

These are some of the things we have put forward as concrete, positive proposals to address the unemployment crisis, and the best we hear from the government is that it is increasing public subsidies for the Canada summer jobs program. In reality, the increase in public subsidies being proposed is a drop in the bucket compared to the vast unemployment numbers we are dealing with.

We in the opposition have talked about what our plan and proposals are. I would like to know what the government's plan is for dealing with this escalating unemployment crisis.

• (1855)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we take this issue very seriously. We are very much concerned about Canada's economy and the issue of employment. In fact, when the Prime Minister was elected six months ago, one of the first pieces of legislation we passed was to build one Canadian economy. This is something that is going to generate literally tens of thousands of jobs.

Recently, we heard the announcement about major projects. Premiers have been working with the Prime Minister and other stakeholders, such as indigenous community members. We have literally presented five major projects.

We could talk about LNG in B.C. By the way, there is also a copper component in B.C. We could talk about the issue of the nuclear energy development in Ontario. We could talk about the copper mine in Saskatchewan. We could talk about the port of Montreal, which is obviously in Montreal, and its impact.

The member made reference to a small amount of money. We are talking about \$60 billion, with a “b”. This is something that our new Prime Minister, who has only been the prime minister for six months and after putting together a cabinet, has already put onto the table.

We have a budget coming on November 4. I suspect we will see some very encouraging signs in that budget.

At the end of the day, we are very sensitive to important issues like inflation and the need for job creation. That is why the cabinet, the Prime Minister and the Liberal caucus continue to work very hard on that particular issue.

The member made reference to immigration and temporary workers in particular. I can tell the member that when we think of immigration, we want to have sustainable immigration. The Prime Minister has made that commitment. There have been some problems. We have a new minister, Prime Minister and caucus that are determined to fix those problems, but the issue is not as simple as the member has tried to portray it.

He made the argument that the temporary workers are causing problems, but that is not the case in the province of Manitoba. Talk to the province of Manitoba and take a look at some of our rural communities, and even those in rural Alberta. Listen to what rural communities in Alberta or Saskatchewan might be saying. Talk to some of our rural communities in the province of Quebec. Are they all taking the same side as the leader of the Conservative Party? The short answer is no. It is not as simple as the Conservative Party tries to portray it.

Again, on behalf of the government, the Prime Minister has made a commitment that we are going to deal with immigration and the temporary visa issues. Yes, that means it might take some time, but we will deal with it. We will get through it. In all fairness, he has been the Prime Minister for six months, along with the cabinet. We have a budget that is coming forward, I believe, on November 4.

At the end of the day, I am confident that we are on the right track. We are in fact improving the conditions. Look at all the things that have to be overcome. Whether it is Trump, tariffs or the need to expand our international trade opportunities, we are doing what we can.

• (1900)

**Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate what a difficult job the hon. member for Winnipeg North has. He spent the last 10 years defending every aspect of the Trudeau government, and now he is here as the spokesman for this promise, attesting that his government will fix the problems that his government created. I do not think that the Liberal fixes to Liberal problems are going to work either. They have created new bureaucracies to identify as priorities some projects that were already under way.

Fundamentally, when it comes to unemployment, I will just say this: The proof will be in the results. If we include the self-employed, there were over 100,000 jobs lost last month. That is long post Trudeau, and our economy continues to shed jobs. It continues on the same trajectory.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

At what point will the member realize that we continue to see the loss of many jobs and we continue to see high unemployment? At some point, will he recognize that what they are doing is not working?

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member says, though I do not necessarily believe the number, that we lost 100,000 jobs in the last few months. When there is a new government and a new prime minister, we cannot expect that instantaneously the stats are going to reverse. Instead I would suggest taking a look at the initiative the Prime Minister has just announced with the different premiers and the stakeholders that is going to generate in excess of 60 billion dollars' worth of investment and is going to generate tens of thousands of jobs. These are projects that are taking place and are going to happen.

The bureaucracy that the member just made reference to is the Major Projects Office, which is located in Calgary, Alberta, so he is even criticizing the government for establishing a Major Projects Office in Calgary. I wonder whether all his Alberta colleagues agree with that.

### HOUSING

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in June I stood in the House and asked the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure about the housing market and the housing market's stall in the GTA. I noted at that time to the minister that housing sales in the GTA were 89% below their 10-year average. In response, the minister agreed with me in part; in fact he said, “We are seeing a stall in the market as people wait for that cut.” The cut the minister was referring to was the GST cut for first-time homebuyers, and then he invited me and my colleagues in the Conservative Party to support that proposal.

We kept our end of the bargain; we worked co-operatively with the government and supported the cut on the GST for first-time homebuyers. Unfortunately, the minister has not kept up his end of the bargain. The Building Industry and Land Development Association confirms that the market stall continues, despite the minister's promising to reverse it. BILD says that new home sales in August were down 81% below their 10-year average, and new condos were 90% below their 10-year average.

Another study released this week, by Missing Middle Initiative and the Residential Construction Council of Ontario, provides some stark numbers on the ongoing market stall. In the town of Georgina, in my neck of the woods, total housing starts in the first half of 2025 for singles, semis and row housing were just 42; that is nearly 60% below the previous four-year average. In the town of Stouffville, another town in my riding, the number was just 12. The numbers are equally troubling for the largest housing market in the country, Toronto, of course, where housing starts for singles, semis and row housing are down 40%.

The report goes on to say, “This is a clear indication that Ontario's housing situation will get worse”. Young people need a house they can afford, not a Brookfield-built, government-approved shipping container.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Let me go over a bit of history for the parliamentary secretary. During the reign of Catherine II, former empress of Russia, it is alleged that during her tour of the Crimean region, her lover and minister, Grigory Potemkin, went before her to set up villages along the Nepa River so that as the empress came down the river to tour her empire, she and her foreign entourage would see thriving villages full of happy villagers. Of course the reality was quite different, because the villages were fake, and the villagers were just actors.

If we fast-forward to summer 2025, the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure presided over a modern-day Potemkin village, where the Prime Minister announced housing construction in front of a housing construction scene. The problem for the Prime Minister, just like it was for Catherine the Great at the time, is that it was just a scene. The cranes and construction buildings were just a scene, just like out of a Hollywood movie, because the Liberals are not building homes; they are building illusions.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is this: Will the minister agree that he has failed to reverse the market stall, change course and let Canadians buy homes?

● (1905)

**Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree on this. Everyone in this country should have access to an affordable, safe and healthy place to live. Let me assure members that this government is focused on making housing more affordable and attainable. This is why we are taking action on affordable housing across the range of the affordability continuum. We are talking about co-ops, social housing and deeply affordable homes, exactly the kinds of homes for the missing middle the member is talking about.

Our government is taking action with the recent launch of “build Canada homes”, with \$13 billion in investments, including funding for supportive and transitional housing and for the Canada rental protection fund to preserve the affordability of units. At the core of its mission, “build Canada homes” will finance and build affordable housing at scale across Canada, including in rural areas. It will leverage public lands, offer flexible financial incentives, attract private capital, facilitate large portfolio projects and support manufacturers to build the homes that Canadians need.

“Build Canada homes” will partner with builders and housing providers that are focused on long-term affordability. It will focus on using Canadian-made materials and modern construction methods, such as factory-built housing, to catalyze an entirely new Canadian housing industry, one that builds faster and more sustainably. When we talk about that, we are talking about really increasing the productivity of the construction industry through digitization and automation where it makes sense.

“Build Canada homes” is one of the ways our government is addressing barriers, reducing risk and helping to navigate the process of building non-market housing. We will work closely with builders, investors, indigenous partners and all levels of government to continue to implement innovative solutions to complex problems.

The government is also taking targeted financial measures to make home buying more affordable for Canadians. As my colleague noted, by eliminating the GST for first-time home purchases at or under \$1 million and lowering the GST on homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million, our government is making it easier for Canadians to enter the housing market.

We are also making the process of buying a home fairer, simpler and more transparent through actions such as the creation of the blueprint for a homebuyers' bill of rights, which sets out principles for a fair and transparent rental system. We are calling on provinces and territories to take actions that support the blueprint's principles, improve the rental system and ensure rental markets work for Canadians. Working together with our partners, we will help deliver affordable housing options that meet the needs and the budget of families, the kinds of homes that families need.

We will continue our work to ensure that all Canadians have a place to call home, because housing is a basic need. We hope our colleagues across the aisle can support us on this as we move forward with measures to support the industry.

● (1910)

**Jacob Mantle:** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary said the Liberals are trying to make it easier for Canadians to enter the housing market. I think she should walk down any street in Ontario. It is harder than ever to buy a home. At no point in history has it been harder to buy a home in this country. That is not getting better; that is only getting worse.

In fact, the president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario said, “Housing projects have been shelved and the industry has hit a wall. The outlook is bleak, and we are trending in the wrong direction.” Their prescription was “to lower the tax burden and modernize the [building] process” and get government out of the way. What was not in their prescription was a fourth bureaucracy to build homes that people do not want.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Mr. Speaker, our government is using every tool at our disposal and taking coordinated action to help increase supply and ensure it is adapted to the needs and budget of Canadian families, change the way Canada builds housing and make housing more affordable for Canadians. We all know that right now a lot of affordable housing is not really affordable, including all of the condo market that the member is talking about.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

“Build Canada homes” will offer a bold new approach combining financing, land access and development expertise under one roof to get big projects off the ground and tackle exactly the barriers the member is talking about. Unlike the Conservatives, who advocate a do-nothing approach, we are full steam ahead. These actions, along with measures like the affordable housing fund and the apartment construction loan program, will help restore affordability for Canadians.

Given the urgency of the housing crisis for Canadians, we are taking immediate action. We are doing it in a way that will support

our workers and our industries and make life more affordable for Canadians.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:13 p.m.)

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