



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

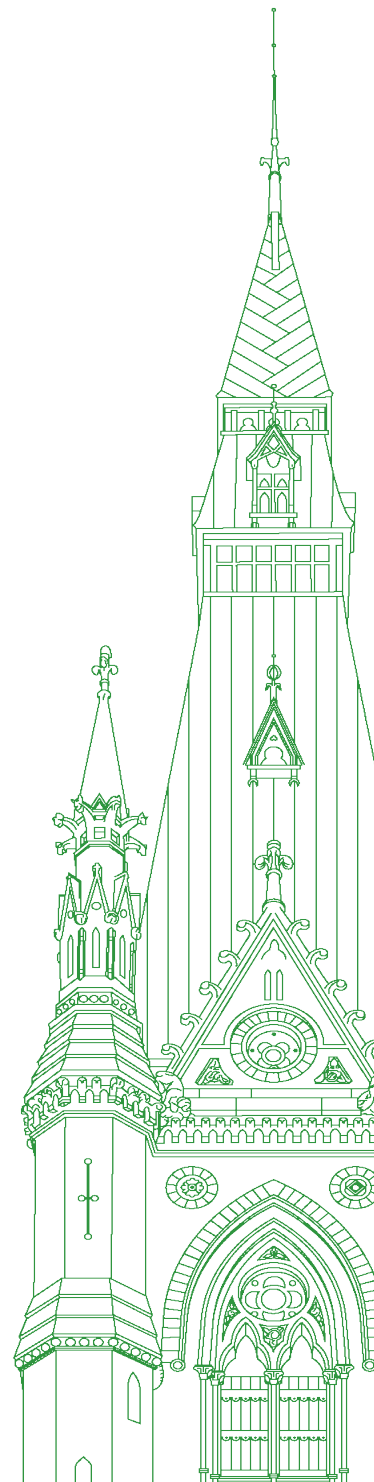
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, October 1, 2025

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore will be leading us in the singing of the national anthem today.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

JIM BRADLEY

Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to borrow a line, Jim Bradley was as “constant as the northern star”. From when he was first elected to city council in 1970, few can remember a time when Jim was not serving our community. He was elected to Queen's Park in 1977, becoming the second longest-serving MPP in Ontario's history, and served as Niagara's regional chair until his death.

As environment minister, he shaped the province by securing agreements to end acid rain and introducing the blue box program. In St. Catharines, his legacy is everywhere, from the widening of the QEW to our new hospital and the Performing Arts Centre, and so many others.

Jim's dedication was unmatched. He went to everything. If someone was at a community event over the last half century, the odds are that Jim was there. His great strength was knowing what mattered to regular folks, not just to what he called the chattering class.

I will miss my friend. I will miss our phone calls, his sage advice and our bemoaning about our beloved Blue Jays. Rest in peace, Jim. He served St. Catharines with distinction, dignity and heart.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberals, Canadians are not safe anymore. Violent crime is up 55%, gun crime is up 130%, and extortions are up 330%.

Recently, the Swift 1200 radio station in Surrey was shot up, which was allegedly tied to extortion. A Calgary family reached out to me to say their house and business were shot up, and that was also tied to extortion. The Liberals' soft-on-crime policies have turned Canada into a lawless land where violent repeat criminals get bail easily. Liberals are now targeting law-abiding, trained, tested and licenced hunters, farmers and sport shooters in a \$750-million gun-grab scheme. Even the Minister of Public Safety admits this scheme does nothing to stop crime and is nothing more than a Liberal, taxpayer-funded vote grab.

The Liberals need to scrap the gun grab now. Instead of hug-a-thug policies, Conservatives have proposed common-sense bills, such as the jail not bail act, which would keep our streets safe. If the Liberals are serious about getting tough on crime, they will pass these bills now to keep Canadians safe.

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WHITBY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, I was honoured to partner with the Whitby Chamber of Commerce in hosting our second annual Whitby job fair. More than 1,000 job seekers connected with 33 local employers, opening doors and building brighter futures in our community.

I thank the Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Karey Anne Large and Gizem Uysal for their help in making this event a success. It was a pleasure to engage with employers such as the Canadian Armed Forces and the Canada Border Services Agency, which offer fulfilling careers in service to all Canadians.

Our new government is creating jobs, supporting workers and driving growth with transformative projects, such as Ontario Power Generation's Darlington nuclear project, which will bring 1,600 new jobs to Durham region.

Statements by Members

The Whitby job fair exemplifies our commitment to supporting Canadian workers and industries by helping them expand the opportunities they need to step boldly into the future. That is how we build Canada strong.

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CANADIAN ENERGY SECTOR

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, Imperial Oil announced it will lay off 20% of its workforce and relocate its headquarters out of Calgary. The stampede city gets the shaft again.

The Prime Minister has the power to eliminate Bill C-48 and Bill C-69, the emissions cap and the industrial carbon tax, but he does not care about the average Canadian. He does not have to tell his family he does not know how they will pay the mortgage or put groceries on the table. To add insult to injury, it is rumoured that Imperial's headquarters are being sold off to none other than Brookfield. Not only did the Prime Minister cause this demise, but he could also be profiting from it. The truth comes out.

The Prime Minister does not give a rip about Calgary, does not give a rip about Alberta or, for that matter, Canada. The bad news for him is that my Conservative colleagues and I still do, and we will not retreat until the promise of Canada is restored.

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● (1405)

[Translation]

CENTRE DE FEMMES LA MOISSON

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to acknowledge the 40th anniversary of the Centre de femmes La Moisson, a women's centre in my riding that provides invaluable support to women in our community, regardless of their age or circumstances.

For the past four decades, and through the efforts of its outstanding team, the centre has been providing more than just a welcoming place. It is a place for solidarity, education and personal development. Workshops, community activities and mentorship programs all contribute to the well-being of the community in Vaudreuil.

It is with great respect and much enthusiasm that we celebrate 40 years of the Centre de femmes La Moisson. May the coming years bring much success.

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[English]

BREAST CANCER

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, breast cancer is the most common cancer in Canadian women. One in eight women will develop breast cancer during their lifetime, which impacts more than just the patients. It also impacts their families, friends and communities.

We know early detection and treatment saves lives. Leading experts, including the Canadian Cancer Society, Dense Breasts Canada, Breast Cancer Canada and the Canadian Association of Radiologists, are all calling on the Canadian Task Force on Preven-

tive Health Care to revise its guidelines to start breast cancer screening at age 40 and to extend it past age 75.

I thank all the brave women who are publicly sharing their journeys with breast cancer. They are not only raising awareness but also helping tackle the stigma associated with women's health. I also want to give a special shout-out to my friend Pam Cholak and tell her to keep on fighting. She makes the world a better place.

I would say to all the ladies out there who are putting off getting a mammogram that they should talk to their doctor today. I would tell anyone out there in a battle with breast cancer to keep fighting. We are all cheering for them.

Not today, cancer.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN WOMEN'S RUGBY 15S TEAM

Jacques Ramsay (La Prairie—Atateken, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding achievement of the Canadian women's rugby 15s team, which, despite their opponents' terrifying haka, won a historic victory last week against former world champions the Black Ferns.

This past Saturday, our players lost to the new world champions, the Red Roses, but not without putting up a stellar fight.

Anyone who has ever played with a Gilbert rugby ball knows that rugby is the ultimate team sport. Victory is impossible without cohesion and chemistry between team members, and our Canadian players demonstrated these qualities in spades both on and off the field.

I want to celebrate the courage and determination of these women, including Sophie de Goede, who will surely inspire an entire generation of young athletes. I thank them. They are Canada's ambassadors.

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[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would say to the Hamilton steelworker and the workers of Arvin Avenue, who lose sleep over job security, and to the recently unemployed, that they have done everything right. The Prime Minister cannot make a deal and has failed them.

I would say to the many who visit food banks in Hamilton that they have done everything right. The Liberal inflation food tax has failed them.

*Statements by Members***PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

I would say to the many who do not feel safe walking down the street in their own neighbourhoods that they have done everything right. The Liberals' soft-on-crime policy has failed them.

The Liberals had the chance last week to vote for a Conservative motion that would put violent repeat offenders behind bars. They voted against it. Soon we will have a vote on the Conservative jail not bail act. I hope the Liberals will join us in that vote. Today, we will vote on a Conservative motion to lower food inflation. Will the Liberals do the right thing and vote with us and Canadians ?

* * *

[Translation]

RIDING OF BERTHIER—MASKINONGÉ

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to acknowledge three anniversaries that mark the collective history of Berthier—Maskinongé.

First, there is the 200th anniversary of Saint-Gabriel-de-Brandon, which sits on the shores of Lake Maskinongé, the jewel of the Lanaudière region. Then there is the 175th anniversary of Saint-Paulin, a magnificent municipality that shines bright in the heart of the Maskinongé RCM. Finally, there is the 175th anniversary of Saint-Édouard-de-Maskinongé, a great place to live, surrounded by mountains and cottage country.

There is no shortage of waterways, forests and agriculture in these three municipalities. These milestone anniversaries remind us that each village and each generation has shaped our region with heart and determination. Congratulations to all the engaged citizens who keep the spirit of these communities alive and who bring the celebrations to life. Together, let us honour the past and continue on the path towards a future that is worthy of our history.

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● (1410)

[English]

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is national energy efficiency day.

Energy efficiency saves Canadians money, cuts pollution and creates jobs. The sector employs nearly a half a million Canadians and has the potential to create a lot more. Energy efficiency circulates money back into all of our communities and contributes positively in all of our ridings.

As we strive to be the world's top energy superpower, Canada must invest massively in energy-efficient projects to strengthen our economy. Whether through accelerating the use of heat pumps, insulation, LED lights or smart thermostats, energy efficiency is the key to a greener, healthier, prosperous Canada. That is why energy efficiency deserves to be treated as a priority, not just today, but every day.

I urge all members to officially recognize October 1 as national energy efficiency day.

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been racking up the air miles lately and Canadians are only seeing postcard pictures to show for it. I am starting to wonder if he is travelling to the U.K. so much just to pick up the extra clothes that he left at home.

If we measured success by jet lag and passport stamps, the Prime Minister would earn top marks, but here are the facts. He promised to remove tariffs and diversify markets, yet our canola producers are now facing crippling tariffs. He promised the fastest-growing economy in the G7, but we are the fastest-shrinking economy. He said to judge him by grocery store prices, but they are rising faster today than when he became Prime Minister. He said we are going to “spend less and invest more”, but somehow his deficit is set to be billions more than even his predecessor's.

The last time I checked, Canadians care about grocery store prices, out-of-control crime and stronger take-home pay, not photo ops in foreign capitals. Since the Prime Minister has failed to keep his promises, maybe he should park the plane, stay for a while and work on improving the lives of Canadians.

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CANADIAN WOMEN'S RUGBY

Emma Harrison (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Canadian women's rugby team on its inspiring performance at the Rugby World Cup. The team is bringing home not only a silver medal but also the distinct honour of uniting Canadians and the House.

Last week, I talked to Danielle, the mom of number 22 Olivia Apps, about the struggles that athletes face in their pursuit to compete at the highest level. The challenging road that female athletes climb is familiar to me. In 2003, I had the privilege of playing for Canada at the world cup of lacrosse, a path that was created by the female athletes who came before me. Now, in 2025, the Canadian women's rugby team has undoubtedly paved the way for future generations of female athletes.

Today, I rise to not only congratulate the team's players but also to thank them. I thank them not only as a woman and a female athlete but also as the mother of a one-year-old daughter who will grow up watching the strength of female athletes on the world stage at sold-out stadiums. My hope is that her generation will see this as the way things have always been, but we will know.

I thank team Canada for inspiring us and propelling the future of women's sports forward.

*Oral Questions***TORONTO BLUE JAYS**

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for once in this place, we can all agree on something. Congratulations to the 2025 Toronto Blue Jays for clinching the division. They stand tall as champions of the American league. Clinching the division is not just baseball. It is also a public service. Now the rest of Canada can stop doing playoff math like deranged accountants in the most stressful reality show there is.

The Jays have rocked the dome, they have made this country proud and they have given us permission to believe that this is our year. On behalf of Canadians from coast to coast to coast, I wish them best of luck in the playoffs. May the bullpen stay steady and the bats stay hot because, this year, we want it all.

Fly all the way south to the World Series, boys. October is for the birds.

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NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

David Myles (Fredericton—Oromocto, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Wolastoqey Tribal Council and Under One Sky for welcoming me and my family to their truth and reconciliation events yesterday. Hundreds of community members gathered at sunrise to remember through ceremony all those who never made it home after being sent to residential schools.

● (1415)

[Translation]

In the afternoon, many others gathered on the Sitansisk powwow grounds to share their stories and songs and to dance. It was a powerful reminder of resilience in the face of years of oppression.

[English]

There is a reason why “truth and reconciliation” are listed in that order. It starts with the truth of our past, listening deeply and sitting with that truth no matter how uncomfortable. Only then can reconciliation begin. Reconciliation is also about hope and the belief that a better relationship is not only possible but also necessary to live up to our full potential as a country.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve to live in peace and security. That security was shattered like bullets through broken glass at a radio station in Surrey once again. Swift radio was hit with a third extortion-related gunfire attack just yesterday. I spoke with owner Kulwant Dhesi, who had invited me to his station earlier. He said his family cannot sleep. This joins countless other examples in Brampton and Surrey along with, now, a spate of shootings in Laval.

Here are the facts. Violent crime is up 54% under the Liberal government's catch-and-release bail system. Extortion is up 330% after Liberals lowered the penalties for extortion with a gun. Extortion is up 600% in B.C. alone. It is time to repeal these Liberal catch-and-release laws, restore order at our border and bring peace and security to our people.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Juanita Nathan (Pickering—Brooklin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw attention to a deeply troubling development.

The second phase of excavation at the Chemmani mass graves in Sri Lanka concluded on September 6, uncovering the remains of 240 men, women and mostly children. According to Amnesty International, Sri Lanka has one of the highest numbers of enforced disappearances in the world, with estimates of up to 100,000 over the decade. Each of these cases represents a profound loss for families still seeking answers.

As the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances reviews Sri Lanka's record, I call on the House to remember the disappeared, to stand with the families and to honour the dignity of those whose lives were taken.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the Prime Minister broke his promise to negotiate a win with the Americans by July 21, lumber tariffs have more than doubled and job losses are piling up. Kap Paper is potentially laying off 300 workers in northern Ontario. That is on top of 800 workers losing their jobs at Imperial Oil. TransCanada and Enbridge are building more in the United States as their headquarters move south, after the Prime Minister broke his promise to “build, baby, build”.

Does the Prime Minister not realize that when he does not do his job, Canadians lose theirs?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our sympathies are with the families of the workers at Imperial Oil.

Our actions are with the workers and the management of Kap Paper. They are having meetings with the Minister of Industry and a variety of other government officials today.

Our support is four-square behind Algoma Steel, with \$400 million between the federal government and the Province of Ontario to build Canada strong.

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister took office, 86,000 more Canadians became unemployed. We have the second-highest unemployment in the G7. This is all the result of out-of-control government spending and taxes. Every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians, and now the Parliamentary Budget Officer rates his deficits as “very alarming”, “stupefying”, “shocking”, “unsustainable”, “if you don't change, this is done”, “something's going to break” and as if we are at the edge of a cliff. Those are the words of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

When will the Prime Minister stop his out-of-control spending? Is it when he is over the edge of the cliff?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a little thing called cause and effect. The cause that the Leader of the Opposition is missing is the U.S. tariffs that are hitting steel, the U.S. tariffs that are hitting lumber and the U.S. tariffs that are hitting our auto sector. That is why we need to build this country strong. That is why we are getting spending under control. That is why we are going to spend less to invest more. I believe in this country. He can come join us.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he says, “spend less”. Deficit spending is up almost 100% since the Prime Minister took office.

As for investment, it has fallen. In fact, \$50 billion of net investment has left since he took office, yet he repeats the same promises the Liberals have been making for a decade. They said their deficit would lead to more investment. Since they took office, investment is down by 10%, the worst investment record in the G7. In fact, with \$600 billion more debt under the current government, investment has fallen.

How much more debt would the Liberals have to add on the backs of Canadians to reverse this disastrous result?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is time for a little fiscal lesson for the Leader of the Opposition.

We have the strongest credit rating in the world, a AAA from S&P and Moody's; the lowest deficit in the G7; the lowest debt level in the G7; the lowest net debt-to-GDP in the G7; and the biggest potential in the G7.

This side of the House believes in Canada.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that it sometimes gets heated in this place. Recently, I said that the Prime Minister is just as irresponsible with money as Justin Trudeau. I now realize that was unfair to Justin Trudeau. In reality, he has increased the deficit by almost 70% above what Justin Trudeau left behind. Now, the Parliamentary Budget Officer describes the Prime Minister's deficit as “alarming”, “stupefying”, “unsustainable”, “if you don't change, this is done” and “something's going to break”.

How is it even possible for the Prime Minister to be more fiscally incompetent than the drama teacher?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot imagine why it gets heated in the House with language like that.

The government is conducting a comprehensive spending review. The government is building houses. The government is building projects in the national interest. The government is building Canada strong.

He can come join us.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that came from a true expert in economics, the Parliamentary Budget Officer. He said, and I quote, that the this Prime Minister's deficits are very alarming, stupefying, shocking and unsustainable. He also said that if things do not change, then this is done, that something is going to break and that Canada has not gone over the edge, but it is looking out over the cliff.

Every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of Canadians' pockets. Does he finally recognize that Canadians can no longer afford his incompetence?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the strongest record in the G7. Canada's long-term interest rates are almost the lowest in the G7, lower than the U.S. key interest rate. There is no premium here, but there is ambition on this side of the House.

We have an opportunity to build Canada strong.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised that Canadians would be able to judge him by their experience at the grocery store. Well, that experience is what is now being called struggle meals, with Canadians now sharing tips on how they can scrounge together meals that are often of lower nutritional value because that is all they can afford. Food price inflation has accelerated to almost double the Bank of Canada's target, rising 50% faster in Canada than in the United States since the Prime Minister took office, promising the reverse.

Will the Prime Minister finally axe the Liberal taxes on groceries so that Canadians can afford to eat?

• (1425)

[Translation]

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, there is no GST on groceries.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Number two, we cut the carbon tax. There is no carbon tax on farms. There is no carbon tax on grocery stores. There is no carbon tax—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. Mark Carney: No, there is not on anything under 50 kilotons.

Mr. Speaker, we see the big picture. We know that real wages have been growing every single month since I became Prime Minister.

* * *

*[Translation]***CANADA POST**

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has just interfered in the already complex negotiations going on at Canada Post to the point where its actions seem like nothing less than pure provocation in a dispute already fraught with complications.

The uncertainty the government has sown is affecting not only workers, but many families as well. It is fomenting uncertainty in villages in the regions of Quebec and, presumably, within the regions of Canada as well. It is spreading uncertainty in the regions and among seniors most of all.

We want to clearly understand. Does the Prime Minister see the postal service as an essential service?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the postal service is absolutely an essential service. Canada Post must remain viable.

Right now, the situation is difficult. Canada Post is losing \$10 million a day. We need to act. Restructuring is needed.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I suspect that the deficit the government is running up is going to be a lot bigger than that.

If this is an essential service, and if the goal is consistency, why does the government want to drastically reduce this service? Why was it done in such a way that the workers had to turn on their televisions to find out what was going on with this? Why did the government not consult people instead, and why did it borrow an old Conservative policy?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I only recently became Prime Minister.

Changes have been needed at Canada Post for quite some time, because it is an essential service in this country.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if Quebecers and Canadians had wanted Conservatives, they would have voted for more Conservatives.

The Liberals are adopting a Conservative fiscal approach. The Liberals are adopting a Conservative approach to climate change and the oil sector. The Liberals are adopting policies that look very much like Conservative-style austerity, with direct borrowing.

Will the Prime Minister scrap his plan and bring serious people to the table to reform a postal service that does in fact really need it?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is up to Canada Post and the union to come up with a solution together. However, in this context, Canada Post needs to show a little more flexibility and act in a manner consistent with the recommendations in the Kaplan report.

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*[English]***FINANCE**

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar that the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians in Liberal taxes and inflation. The Prime Minister should know this. He calls himself a great economist, but he is going to spend over 60% more than even Justin Trudeau did. Parliament's independent fiscal watchdog says it is “alarming”, it is “stupefying”, it is “shocking” and it is “unsustainable”. He says something is going to break and that we are on the edge of a fiscal cliff.

Why is the Prime Minister going to drive us off that cliff at full speed?

● (1430)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is why we said that we need to spend less so we can invest more.

Unlike the Conservatives, I believe in Canada. I believe in Canadians. I believe in the will of this nation. We have the talent to lead in the 21st century. We have strong industries. We build planes. We build cars. We build ships. We have critical minerals. We have energy. We are the only country in the G7 to have a free trade agreement with all the other G7 nations.

Instead of talking down Canada, the Conservatives should celebrate the work of the government.

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Liberal member who in 2015 promised that massive deficits were investments, but it was all a bait and switch, because investment collapsed while debt went through the roof. However, instead of sobering up from the debt binge that they have been on, the Liberals are just going to keep spending more money in a forever hangover. That means higher taxes and higher inflation for every Canadian.

The first step in fighting addiction is admitting one has a problem, so when will the minister stand up and finally admit that his reckless spending is sending us over the cliff?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the same old Conservatives. It is the same old slogans.

The member might have missed that we cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. She might want to talk to people in her riding and across the nation. The first thing the government did was to tackle affordability. Why? It was because that is what Canadians told us to do. They also told us to build homes; that is why we created Build Canada Homes. They told us to build the most resilient economy, and that is what we are going to do. We are going to build the most resilient economy in the G7.

We are going to be strong. We are the north.

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals assured us in 2015 that running massive deficits was an investment. A decade later, we all know that it was just a bait and switch. The reality is that despite consistent efforts to falsely stimulate the economy, investment in Canada has collapsed. There have been 10 years of Liberal broken promises. Debt up equals investment down.

We know that the budget will have a massive deficit, but does the Prime Minister really expect Canadians to believe that doubling down will change the results?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are retooling the Canadian economy by advancing national projects of interest. We are making Canada the strongest economy in the G7. That means shortening project reviews to two years and removing duplication, while maintaining the environmental standards and working with indigenous peoples.

We are making Canada stronger. It would be great if the Conservatives would support us.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another Liberal bait and switch is that the Prime Minister promised to cap spending, yet he is on track to double Trudeau's deficits. He promised to make Canada the strongest-growing economy in the G7, yet we have the worst economic performance in the group. He promised to create jobs, but in reality, 86,000 Canadians have lost their job since the Prime Minister took office.

When will the Prime Minister tell Canadians that the plan to grow our economy was just a scheme to get elected?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday I was in Vancouver celebrating the launch of LNG to be sent across to our allies. There were 75,000 Canadians who worked on that project. Last week we approved, with the Province of British Columbia, the Ksi Lisims LNG facility, which will be as big again.

We are building Canada strong.

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of hard-working Canadian workers, families and seniors. Justin Trudeau promised that deficit spending would be an investment. The result was that the debt went up and the investment went down. That gave Canada the worst economic record in the G7 and the worst inflation in 40 years.

Oral Questions

No matter what the Liberals promise, the results are always the same: more debt, higher costs and declining investment. Why should Canadians believe that this time will be any different?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, interest rates are down, and as we speak, wages are growing higher than inflation. Meanwhile, the CPPIB CEO says that the world's largest investors are focusing on Canada.

What are we doing? We are building national major projects. We are making sure also to launch a new defence industrial strategy that will create jobs in this country. The opposition needs to come on board to make sure Canadians benefit from it.

• (1435)

[Translation]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar spent by the Liberal Prime Minister comes straight out of the pockets of Canadians who are watching at home right now. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has described the Liberal deficits as, and I quote, alarming, stupefying, shocking and unsustainable. He said that if the Liberals continue as they are, then it is game over for this country. I am not the one saying that. It is the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Does the Prime Minister realize that what he is doing right now is putting Canada on the road to disaster?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, actually, economists would disagree with what my colleague is saying because interest rates are falling and wages are rising faster than inflation.

What we are doing right now is attracting capital from around the world. Our goal is to do that through projects of national interest, such as the Port of Montreal at Contrecoeur or the major rail line everyone has been talking about that will connect all of northern Quebec to the Port of Saguenay.

We are working on big projects. We want to build more homes and we also want to have a defence strategy.

Oral Questions

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are not my words, they are the words of the Parliamentary Budget Officer himself. The Prime Minister promised to cap Liberal spending, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that that is yet another broken Liberal promise. Trudeau's deficits are about to double. Who would have thought? The Parliamentary Budget Officer says that something has got to give and warns that we are on the edge.

Seriously, could the Prime Minister stand up and acknowledge that, unfortunately, he is once again leading Canada into massive, unreasonable deficits?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is leading the country to prosperity. That is why we said that we needed to change our approach. We need to spend less so we can invest more. Why? It is because Canada is a big country. We have talent across the country. We are capable of making cars, planes and ships. We have critical minerals. We have abundant energy, and we are the only G7 country that has a free trade agreement with every G7 nation.

On that side of the House, they should be celebrating the Prime Minister's plan, because together we are going to make Canada the strongest country in the G7.

CANADA POST

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government is to blame for the postal crisis.

It announced that it was overhauling Canada Post but did not even consult the workers. They found out about it in the news. Now, no one is getting their mail. Some people are not getting their cheques or have to travel to pick them up. Businesses are having to improvise to get their parcels delivered. Quebec is afraid that no one will receive their ballot to vote in the municipal elections. All of this is because the minister is improvising without consulting anyone.

Seriously, what else did he expect?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

I would like to set the record straight. This dispute has been going on for 20 months. The union was on strike from November 2024 to December 2024. I was nowhere close to being a minister at that time. My colleague says that we did not consult, but we are implementing the Kaplan report recommendations. The inquiry commission reviewed Canada Post's financial statements, heard from the union and management, and made sensible and responsive recommendations to modernize the institution.

With Canada Post losing \$10 million a day, we can no longer afford to wait to modernize an institution that is essential to the country.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the postal crisis was brought on by the federal government.

The best example is passports. People waiting for passports that will not arrive on time have to go to a Service Canada office to get one and pay hundreds of dollars.

As it turns out, Service Canada reports to the same minister. It is clear that the minister did not even think to look for solutions for people before kicking off a firestorm at Canada Post.

Why is it that Quebeckers once again have to pay the price for the Liberals' incompetence?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a plan in place so that citizens can get their passports.

● (1440)

[English]

Service Canada can quickly support people who have a situation with their passport stuck in the mail. We are available 24-7 to help Canadians.

CARBON PRICING

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Prime Minister was misleading Canadians when he cancelled the carbon tax. I want to quote the food professor, Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, who stated it perfectly: "The carbon tax—"

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I ask the member to start over, without that particular language. It was inadvertent, maybe. I would not suggest that the hon. member is intentionally doing something like that.

John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, we know the Prime Minister was doing a classic Liberal bait and switch when he told Canadians he cancelled the carbon tax. I want to quote the food professor, Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, who put it perfectly:

"The carbon tax was not eliminated.

"Only the consumer portion was reduced to zero. The industrial carbon tax remains fully in place—and has actually increased since April 1. We have argued numerous times that the carbon tax across the supply chain is undermining the competitiveness of our agri-food sector."

Why is the Prime Minister pulling a bait and switch and taxing farmers and the food Canadians rely on?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the industrial carbon price is essential to our credibility as a responsible energy supplier and is key to gaining market access as we diversify our exports. It is driving over \$57 billion in investment, enabling carbon capture projects like the Pathways project and reinforcing Canada's leadership as a low-emission LNG producer. This is the right thing to do.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the Prime Minister some facts. The fact is that food prices have increased nearly 40% since the Liberals were elected 10 years ago. I saw it at the grocery store this weekend. Pork shoulder is up 37%, and my coffee was up 25%. A little package of lunch meat was almost \$10.

The Prime Minister said that he would be judged by food prices. Food Banks Canada has now said that a quarter of Canadians are struggling to put food on the table. That should never be the reality in this country.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing, support the Conservative motion and scrap his taxes on farmers and the food Canadians rely on?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are well aware of who has their backs, and that is why they chose this Liberal government in the last election. Over the last 10 years, they have watched Conservatives vote against all of their interests. Whether it is programs for kids, programs for seniors, training for tradespeople or investments in agriculture, the Conservatives vote against. I hope by the nature of that question, though, that they will not vote against the tax cut for 22 million Canadians. That is how they help Canadians: by standing with them.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians in higher Liberal taxes and inflation. Let us start with the grocery aisle. The Prime Minister promised that he would be judged by Canadians' experience at the grocery store, and since he took office, food prices have been rising 50% faster here than in the U.S. Greta from Trout River, a widow, reached out saying that prices on everything have gone through the roof. She cannot afford to eat.

Will the Liberal Prime Minister stop taxing groceries so Canadians can afford to put food on their tables?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative leader was busy trying to get the only job he ever had back, three months ago today we cut taxes for 22 million Canadians, and we are not stopping there. We are going to cut spending on government operations so we can invest more in nation-building projects, in housing, in infrastructure and in defence. We will create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs, and I ask the Conservatives to cut the rhetoric and get on board.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the real truth is that the Prime Minister has been on this job for half

a year, and grocery prices have already become more unaffordable. The so-called struggle meals, like Hamburger Helper and Kraft Dinner, are trending as Canadians struggle with the high price of food, all because of things like food packaging taxes and the industrial carbon tax. Canadians are judging the Prime Minister, just as he expected. They are asking, pleading, for prices to go down immediately.

Again, will the Prime Minister stop taxing groceries so Canadians can afford to eat?

• (1445)

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we mark National Seniors Day. I want to point out that our government has taken action to ensure seniors in Canada can age with dignity. We are cutting red tape. We are building homes faster, and we have introduced dental care, which more than two million seniors have signed up for.

We are building an economy that works for everyone, while the Conservatives have a record of pushing the retirement age higher. It is very rich coming from them, given they are interested in cutting benefits and leaving seniors behind. While they are voting against support for seniors, we are empowering older Canadians.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of living is out of control and people are stretched thin. Food inflation has reached 70% over the Bank of Canada target and families are paying hundreds of dollars more every year for staples such as meat, fruit, vegetables and coffee. The price of coffee has gone up by 23% over the past few months. This also threatens an industry that supports hundreds of thousands of workers in the country.

Does the Prime Minister realize that every dollar he spends recklessly fuels inflation and increases the cost of living?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are determined to grow the strongest economy in the G7 and protect and strengthen the support measures that help Canadians. Our investments in child care services, dental care and school food programs are not only lowering the cost of living for families, but they are also strengthening Canada by promoting women's participation in the labour market, while giving children the best possible start in life. We are giving families the means to make ends meet.

*Oral Questions**[English]***SENIORS**

Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is National Seniors Day, an opportunity to recognize the contributions that seniors have made to building our communities and our country, yet some are still facing delays in processing old age security and Canada pension plan applications.

Could the Secretary of State for Seniors share what steps are being taken to speed up the processing of these critical applications?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to take a moment to recognize the tremendous contribution of seniors in this country. They built this country, and we assure them that this government is working hard to deliver the benefits they deserve.

Service Canada is streamlining applications, increasing automation and improving communication with clients. We have an action plan to improve the speed and quality of service for seniors in this country, and we will implement this plan. For example, the 96% of seniors receiving GIS are now automatically renewed, ensuring continuity of service. This is the kind of work we are doing to ensure seniors are getting the resources they have worked so hard for.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the generation that built our prosperity is now being bled dry by the Liberal government's "unaffordabillion" crisis. A shocking new report shows that one-third of seniors are covering their adult children's basic costs, and three-quarters say it is draining their retirement. After 10 years of Liberal spending, costs rise and hopes slip away.

Every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of seniors' pockets in Liberal taxes and inflation, inflation that will further increase with the Prime Minister's plan to double the deficit. How many more seniors will be forced to choose between supporting themselves and supporting their families?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so glad the Conservatives are showing interest in Canada's seniors. This new government is taking action to empower Canada's seniors, and we are steadfast in our mission to protect the dignity and security of those who built this country through a lifetime of hard work. That is why we are taking action to ensure that low-income seniors receive the guaranteed income supplement. This is a vital support that helps those with little or no income beyond their old age security.

We are focused on ensuring they receive every dollar they are entitled to, because supporting seniors is not just policy, but a promise we will always uphold.

• (1450)

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after a lifetime of hard work raising their families, seniors deserve to enjoy their retirement, but under the Liberal government, that dream is slipping away. Every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians in higher Liberal taxes and inflation. A new report shows that one in three grandparents is now supporting their adult children and grandchildren, and 76% say that it is cutting into their retirement savings.

How much more inflation will the Prime Minister add with his plan to double the deficit?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is taking action to empower Canada's seniors. With the Conservatives' plan, folks would not have been able to retire until 67. I think it is important to point out that on this side of the House, we are ensuring a strong, stable future for our seniors.

We have crucial programs that provide more than \$1,000 per month to the most financially vulnerable seniors, and we are focused on ensuring that they receive every dollar they are entitled to. We are steadfast in our mission to protect the dignity of seniors, those who built this country, and they—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians in higher Liberal taxes and inflation. A new report shows that one in three seniors is supporting their adult children and grandchildren. What does this mean? It means that 28% of seniors help their adult children with rent or mortgage payments, up from last year. This should be a concern to everyone.

When the Prime Minister doubles the deficit, how much more will grandparents have to pay to house their adult children and grandchildren?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is, of course, National Seniors Day, and I am proud to wish all seniors a happy day on their day.

I am not quite a senior yet, but I am old enough to remember when the Conservatives voted against increasing the OAS. They voted against increasing the GIS. They voted against all other supports for seniors during the pandemic. They called it inflationary spending. Did it take National Seniors Day for Conservatives to see the light?

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what gift do seniors get after 10 years under the Liberal regime? They get a damning report published on National Seniors Day that shows one in three seniors is financially supporting adult children or grandchildren. Sixty-seven per cent have to help their families meet their daily expenses. That is 12% more than last year.

Because of higher Liberal taxes and inflation, every dollar that the Prime Minister spends comes directly from the pockets of Canadians.

I have a question for the Prime Minister. How much more inflation is he going to force on seniors under his plan to double the deficit?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is National Seniors Day and we want to wish our trail-blazing seniors a wonderful day.

Let me assure the member that, unlike him, we are looking after our seniors. He may be too young to remember, but the Conservatives voted against increasing the guaranteed income supplement. They voted against increasing old age security for people aged 75 and over, and they wanted to make seniors wait until age 67 to qualify for retirement. It is disgraceful.

It takes a National Seniors Day to remind them of that.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Prime Minister spends comes out of the pockets of Canadians because of higher Liberal taxes and inflation.

The Prime Minister said that we should judge him based on the prices at the grocery store. Well, let us. Food inflation in Canada is rising 50% faster than in the United States. Food bank usage is at record highs and rising. The St. Thomas Elgin Food Bank will have to feed 30,000 mouths this year, the third straight year of record highs.

The Prime Minister said he would turn the economy around because he is a brilliant banker. Why did he not tell Canadians that, on his watch, more than ever we would need a food banker?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the best ways to combat inflation is to create real opportunities for Canadians. That is exactly what we are doing. We are going to be building. We are building homes and building projects in the national interest, with Canadian lumber, Canadian steel and Canadian unionized workers.

We are optimistic about Canada's future. Will the Conservatives get on board?

* * *

● (1455)

FINANCE

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been caught plagiarizing again. This time, he is copying his protege, Justin Trudeau. Trudeau promised that deficit spending would be an investment. What happened? When the debt went up, investments in Canada collapsed. Then, after COVID, Trudeau said he would remake the economy with deficit spending. This gave Canada the worst growth in the G7 and the worst inflation in 40 years.

No matter what Liberals promise, debt and costs go up while growth and investments go down. Why would it be any different this time?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what helps Canadians is cutting taxes for 22 million

Oral Questions

Canadians, and that is what we did earlier this year. We are supporting affordability measures with actual policies, not just with rhetoric in the House of Commons and not with misinformation.

Time and time again, the Conservatives have stood up in the House to suggest there are taxes on groceries. Canadians know better; they can read their bills. They can go to the bill and see there are no taxes on coffee beans, there are no taxes on meat and there are no taxes on Kraft Dinner.

When are the Conservatives going to show up with some real ideas to support affordability for Canadians?

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not an answer; that is just another Liberal bait and switch.

The Prime Minister promised to cap spending. That promise was broken: The Prime Minister is going to double Justin Trudeau's deficits. The Prime Minister promised Canada would have the strongest economy in the G7. That promise was broken: Canada now has the slowest economic growth in the G7.

The tired, old, incompetent government has presided over 10 years of economic and fiscal vandalism. When will it finally rein in its out-of-control inflationary spending?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 28, Canadians made a clear choice for a leader with business and economic experience versus a leader with none. We are laser focused on cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians. We are cutting taxes for first-time homebuyers. Interest rates are low, and we will build homes at a scale not seen since the Second World War. We will build the strongest economy in the G7. I ask Conservatives to cut the rhetoric and get on board.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer just pulled the fire alarm. He called our finances “very alarming”, “stupefying”, “shocking” and “unsustainable”. He warned, “if [we] don’t change, this is done”. Something is going to break. We are standing at the cliff’s edge, and for the younger generation especially, this is their future at risk. Every dollar the Prime Minister spends today comes out of Canadian pockets tomorrow in higher taxes and higher inflation.

Will the Prime Minister keep marching Canadians toward a cliff of doubling deficits, or will he finally turn back before it is too late?

Oral Questions

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the Conservatives have been for the last four months, but we have criss-crossed the country talking to, consulting with and listening to Canadians. Their message was resoundingly clear: They want us to spend less on government operations, invest more in nation-building projects and strengthen our economy, building the most resilient economy in the G7. Again, the Conservatives should please stop the rhetoric, join with us and get on board.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has once again been caught plagiarizing. He is copying Justin Trudeau. No, the Liberals have chosen Justin Trudeau's top adviser. He is worse than Justin Trudeau.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer was scathing. He called this “unsustainable”. The debt has skyrocketed, investment in Canada is in free fall and Canada has the worst growth in the G7. The result is that the cost of living is going up.

The Liberals are using the same recipe with the same ingredients. Do they think they will get different results?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has clearly chosen to translate a question that was given to him by his leader.

Our answer is clear. Interest rates are falling. We are attracting foreign capital through our major national projects and our international defence strategy, and we will create more jobs across the country.

* * *

● (1500)

SENIORS

Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today on National Seniors Day, we pay tribute to the invaluable contribution of the seniors who shaped our country. That said, many of them are wondering if they can continue to age with dignity in their community.

Can the secretary of state tell us what the government is doing to ensure that seniors have the right to affordable housing?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation for his excellent question.

National Seniors Day is an opportunity to thank our seniors for everything they have done for us and our country.

Our government respects the seniors who want to age with dignity at home and in their community, where they feel comfortable.

We have built more than 50,000 housing units for seniors and put \$1.5 billion on the table through the Canada rental protection fund to provide affordable apartments to seniors. We—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa.

[English]

FIREARMS

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, soft-on-crime Liberal policy has led to gun crime skyrocketing to 130%. Canadians are being terrorized by repeat violent offenders and gangs, yet the Liberals are focused on harassing law-abiding citizens with a gun grab that costs \$750 million. The public safety minister admitted the scheme will not work, but he is going ahead with it anyway. This is not keeping Canadians safe. It is political theatre and we all know it.

When will the Prime Minister protect Canadians and fire the failed public safety-style minister?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that the assault-style firearms compensation program launched this morning in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. It is a pilot that will expand across Canada.

I am also pleased to announce that a number of individuals who are law-abiding gun owners have registered and are looking forward to the compensation they will receive. Canadians are law-abiding people. Gun owners are also law-abiding, and they will be seeking compensation from this program. We look forward to its implementation across Canada.

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the public safety minister, while speaking to his tenant about the Liberal gun confiscation program, said, “Don't ask me to explain the logic to you on this.” His tenant said, “But we're not the problem”. The minister's tenant is 100% correct. Canadians know that hunters, sport shooters and other law-abiding gun owners are not the problem, but under the minister, gun crime is up 130%, with illegal guns being smuggled in through his leaky border.

Will the Prime Minister finally fire the minister today for not keeping Canadians safe?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are fighting crime on all fronts. We are fighting guns at our borders with historic investments. We are in the process of hiring more CBSA and RCMP officers. We have a bill in the House, Bill C-2, which would help fight criminal organizations and make our borders stronger.

Getting assault-style rifles and shotguns out of our communities is also important. We are going to make sure we do this on all fronts. There are still 19,000 other makes and models of guns available for hunters and sport shooters, and they can use those options.

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, loose lips sink ships. In a stunning display of incompetence, the public safety minister admitted that spending \$750 million on a gun grab will not work. The same minister has lost track of 600 foreign national criminals and failed to hire 1,000 additional border guards. Canadians want a government that can keep them safe, but instead of protecting Canadians, the Prime Minister would rather protect the public safety minister and their flawed ideology. The ship is sinking.

Will the Prime Minister fire the Minister of Public Safety?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, firearms tragedies are obviously a tragedy in this country. We had another sad example of that today. What Canadians have clearly expressed to the government, and indeed all parliamentarians, is that Canada needs to distinguish itself in getting rid of assault-style weapons in our society. This party has always supported measures that would accomplish that objective. That party has always stood up against measures that would accomplish that objective. Its members need to get serious about guns.

* * *

● (1505)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I attended a ceremony to honour survivors of a residential school that operated for decades in my riding. Together, we unveiled a plaque in multiple indigenous languages so that, in some small way, they were able to reclaim what was stolen. The elders and knowledge keepers reminded us that true reconciliation occurs when community representatives have a seat around the table as decisions are being made. There cannot be any shortcuts around section 35 rights.

Can the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs update us on work being undertaken by the government to ensure that nation-building projects are developed with indigenous rights holders right from day one?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member of Parliament, Ben Carr—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I will allow the member to start over without naming names.

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand: Mr. Speaker, no project will move forward without honouring section 35. As the Prime Minister has said, meaningful consultation and co-operation are at the heart of our new government approach to nation building.

The indigenous advisory council brings first nations, Métis and Inuit, from day one, to strengthen treaty and constitutional duties, not replace them. With capacity funding and the double \$10 billion

indigenous loan guarantee, indigenous people will help shape and share in the projects.

Following the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we reaffirm our commitment to a lasting, respectful partnership.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, northern Ontario was hit with devastating job news this week when Kap Paper in Kapuskasing announced plans to close its mill, affecting 200 jobs directly and many more indirectly. The company is blaming a lack of federal supports for this decision, saying that although a program was announced months ago to help, nothing is going to be available in time to save this mill.

This is completely ridiculous. It is incompetence at its worst. Why have the Liberals broken their promise to these workers by making big, grand announcements and then leaving northern Ontario abandoned?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the closure of Kap Paper is a gut punch to workers, their families and, of course, their communities. The federal government is at the table and willing to help. The province needs to come back to the table.

That being said, along with the Minister of Jobs, I am meeting with the executives from Kap Paper this afternoon, and we are in solution mode.

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is siding with Canada Post executives to help privatize the postal service. What does that mean? It means cuts to services for seniors, the disability community and rural areas, as well as attacks on well-paying union jobs.

Today, postal workers said no more, rallying on Parliament Hill to tell the Prime Minister to make no more cuts to Canada Post.

Why does the minister not stop what he is doing, actually do his job, protect public services and stop attacking workers?

Business of Supply

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, it is because we realize on this side and know full well that Canada Post is an essential institution to the fabric of our nation that we are taking the necessary steps to put it on the path to financial viability. Canada Post is an institution worth saving. It is an institution, at this time, that needs saving. It is losing \$10 million a day. It needs to modernize. This is why we are taking the steps to make sure we provide service all across the country.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

During question period, the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs provided information about section 35 of the Constitution. The bill actually does not respect section 35 and is in violation of indigenous—

- (1510)
- The Speaker:** That is a matter of debate; it is not a point of order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FOOD TAXATION

The House resumed from September 25 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Foothills relating to the business of supply.

- Call in the members.
- (1520)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 39*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Berthold
Bexte	Bezan
Block	Bonk
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
Deltell	d'Entremont
DeRidder	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall

Duncan	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Gladu	Goodridge
Gourde	Groleau
Guglielmin	Gunn
Hallan	Hardy
Ho	Hoback
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Jeneroux
Jivani	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmiec
Konanz	Kram
Kronis	Kuruc
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lawton	Lefebvre
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Ma
Mahal	Majumdar
Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
Martel	Mazier
McCauley	McKenzie
McLean (Calgary Centre)	Melillo
Menegakis	Moore
Morin	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Poilievre
Redekopp	Rempel Garner
Reynolds	Richards
Roberts	Ross
Rowe	Ruff
Scheer	Seeback
Shipley	Small
Steinley	Stevenson
Strahl	Strauss
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Wagham
Williamson	Zimmer — 138

NAYS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Auguste	Bains
Baker	Bardeesy
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)	Bendayan
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blois	Bonin
Boulerice	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Carney
Carr	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Chang	Chartrand
Chatel	Chen
Chenette	Chi
Church	Clark

Connors
Coteau
Dandurand
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Deschênes
Desrochers
Dhillon
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fancy
Fergus
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen

Gould
Greaves
Guilbeault
Hajdu
Harrison
Hodgson
Housefather
Idlout
Johns
Joseph
Kelloway
Klassen
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Larouche
Lauzon
Lavoie
Leitão
Lightbound
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Cardigan)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
May
McKelvie
McKnight
McPherson
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Noormohamed
Ntumba
Olszewski
Osborne
Petipas Taylor
Provost
Rana
Rocheffort
Royer
Saini
Sari
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Solomon
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Thériault

Cormier
Dabrusin
Danko
DeBellefeuille
Deschênes-Thériault
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duguid
Earle
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Fuhr
Gainey
Gasparro
Gazan
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Grant
Guay
Gull-Masty
Hanley
Hirtle
Hogan
Hussen
Jaczek
Joly
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lattanzio
Lavack
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nguyen
Normandin
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Perron
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sarai
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sodhi
Sousa
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Thompson

Turnbull
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Members

Casey
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The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In keeping with the spirit of how we were operating last week, we note that the member for Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay was not in her seat when you read out the vote. She came in right afterward as you started calling the question on it.

Perhaps you could canvass the member to ask whether she voted from her phone, but it would appear that her vote should not count since she did rise and vote in the chamber.

● (1525)

The Speaker: Was the hon. member in her seat when the vote began? I did not see, personally.

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, I was here for the question.

The Speaker: What I am trying to ask the hon. member is this: I assume the member is saying she was in the chamber when the question was read, but was she in her seat when the vote began?

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, I could clearly hear you say the question.

The Speaker: Was the member in her seat when the voting started? Yes?

We are all hon. members here. We will take the hon. member's word.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is important that everyone clearly understand the rule. The member opposite was not sitting in her seat as you were reading the question. I believe that if you put it to the member in that fashion, she might have been there at the very tail end, but she was not in her seat while the question had started to be read. If members have to be in their seat at the time at which the question is being read from the beginning, then her vote should not count.

Your clarification on the issue would be helpful.

The Speaker: Just to clarify, the rule is that the member has to be able to hear the question but not necessarily be in their seat. However, when the vote begins, they must be in their seat. The hon. member said that she was in her seat, and we obviously give her the benefit of the doubt on that, so we will move on.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***PETITIONS****PUBLIC SAFETY**

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to present a petition on behalf 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 Manitoba west district RCMP found that over an 18-month period, just one offender in Swan River was responsible for 107 offences.

Petitioners continue to suffer consequences from the soft-on-crime Liberal policies, like Bill C-5, which repealed 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 the Swan Valley want to see the end to the Liberals' reckless catch-and-release policies so that criminals can stay 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.

FIREARMS

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to lay before the House today.

The first petition is from citizens in my riding in the community of Blackstock in the Township of Scugog with respect to the public safety minister's gun confiscation plan.

The petitioners point out that the government is trying to ban and confiscate the hunting rifles and shotguns of law-abiding hunters and sport shooters, and that Canada already has one of the most sensible and responsible regimes for controlling firearms anywhere in the world. Moreover, the petitioners note that it is not legal firearms that are the cause of gun violence in this country, but illegal firearms flooding across the border.

The residents of my riding who signed this petition therefore call on the government to repeal Bill C-21 and all relevant orders in council, regulations and other laws concerning the prohibition and confiscation of firearms; cancel the gun confiscation program; apologize to legal firearms owners in Canada; and compensate them for the loss of the use and enjoyment of their firearms.

• (1530)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from citizens and residents of Canada who are calling on the Government of Canada to reject recommendation 430 of the FINA pre-budget report, reaffirm Canada's commitment to an open culture and support each citizen's freedom to promote the common good through advancement of religion without punitive financial measures.

*[Translation]***SUSTAINABLE FINANCE**

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present this petition signed by Canadians who are concerned about the Prime Minister's inaction on sustainable finance.

These petitioners draw the attention of the House to the fact that 10 years ago, in a speech, the Prime Minister referred to what he himself called the “tragedy of the horizon”. Among other things, he called for climate risk to be integrated into the global financial system, while denouncing politicians who make short-term economic decisions without considering the more severe and costly consequences of climate change.

Ten years later, Canada still has not taken the steps needed to hold the financial sector accountable in the face of the climate crisis. The petitioners, much like 65% of Canadians and 73% of Quebecers, are in favour of climate regulations. The Prime Minister called for such regulations 10 years ago, he promised to bring them in during the election campaign, and now he needs to take action.

*[English]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition on behalf of residents of Fairhaven, Meadowgreen Park and Confederation Park in Saskatoon, all of whom have faced significant challenges as crime, chaos and disorder take over their neighbourhoods.

The petitioners note that drug use and homelessness have overrun their neighbourhoods, making public areas, schools and even private backyards unsafe, and that safe supply and harm reduction programs paid for by the federal government have prolonged and encouraged drug use instead of offering treatment for addiction.

The petitioners are calling upon the government to bring back the mandatory minimum sentences for the trafficking, importing and production of illegal narcotics that were removed in Bill C-5; end the dangerous safe supply experiment, which has lowered the cost and increased the supply of narcotics on the street; and invest in real treatment for drug users, such as rehabilitation beds that encourage people to get off drugs.

I fully support this petition.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of concerned Canadians with regard to the Liberal and NDP proposal in the finance committee's report, in recommendations 429 and 430, to revoke the charitable status of pro-life and religion-affiliated organizations in Canada.

Roughly 40% of charities in Canada would be affected by this measure. In fact, the petitioners note that Cardus, a very thoughtful Christian think tank, has quantified that the economic effect of the benefits that communities receive are over 10 times the cost to the Canadian government. However, we know that charities do not do this because of economics; they do it to help the most vulnerable in our communities.

The petitioners therefore call upon the government to reject recommendations 429 and 430 of the report from the finance committee and to protect, defend and uphold the right of charities to advance religion and help their communities.

• (1535)

ANIMAL WELFARE

Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition regarding animals.

Canadian families are dealing with trauma and heartache as they are forced to abandon their pets due to the high cost of basic veterinary care. Elderly Canadians suffer undue stress concerning health costs and care of their beloved pets, sometimes their only companions.

Thousands of domesticated animals, including pregnant cats and dogs, find themselves without shelter, food or warmth. They are completely unprepared for survival and are subjected to the cruelty of starvation, extreme weather, other animals and people. Animal shelters and welfare centres across Canada suffer a tremendous financial burden in the face of the high number of abandoned pets. This forces the centres to turn away many animals in need, all the while making them less able to focus on major issues, such as intervention.

Canada has historically taken strong action toward animal welfare. The citizens who have signed this petition would like to have a refundable tax credit implemented for neutering and spaying and other veterinary care in an amount based on an average of regional costs.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to table this petition, which was created by Tseshah First Nation member Dawn Foxcroft. It is timely. It is around indigenous language funding, and yesterday, as we know, was the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

I am tabling this petition on behalf of Canadians who are deeply concerned about the future of indigenous languages. The petitioners draw the attention of the House to the fact that reconciliation requires urgent action to address the devastating loss of language and culture that first nations have experienced. This is a truth and reconciliation call to action. They note that while more and more indigenous people are seeking to learn their languages, including survivor Clara from Hupacasath First Nation, whom I walked with yesterday and who is learning her language and never had an opportunity, the number of fluent speakers continues to fall. The petitioners further raise concerns that recent changes to federal funding put language preservation and revitalization at risk.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners, many of whom walked yesterday with survivors, therefore call on the Government of Canada to ensure fair, adequate and long-term funding for indigenous languages programming so that this vital work can continue before it is too late.

GAZA

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition signed by close to 1,500 Canadians from coast to coast to coast. The petition is to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

The petitioners note that Canada has a moral and legal obligation to uphold international humanitarian law and refugee protections and that the International Court of Justice and United Nations bodies have raised grave concerns about the ongoing genocide and humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the West Bank. They further note that Canada has demonstrated its capacity for rapid humanitarian response by processing Ukrainian visas in a matter of days, while Palestinian applications are often delayed for over a year.

The petitioners are asking the government to immediately reduce processing times for family reunification applications from Gaza and the West Bank to reflect the urgency of the humanitarian crisis; to simplify application procedures to ensure accessibility for applicants facing extreme conditions, including displacement, famine and destruction of infrastructure; to provide alternative options for applicants to complete biometrics or other documentation outside of Gaza and the West Bank; and to prioritize the evacuation and reunification of Palestinians in life-threatening circumstances.

Finally, the petitioners urge the government to take real action so that the speed in processing applications meets the guidelines that have been set for Ukrainians.

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have the paper version of this petition, but there is an e-petition to this effect, for clarity, that is open for signature until January. It currently has 2,725 names, and the paper petition has 40 names.

The petitioners are concerned constituents and Canadians who are asking for the House of Commons assembled to call on the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to bring home Zain Haq, who is the deported husband of a Canadian citizen and is currently in Pakistan, to be reunited with his wife, Sophia Papp, who is living in Vancouver. The petitioners point out the numerous ways that this couple are an intrinsic part of their community in Vancouver and are calling on the minister to do the right thing.

S. O. 52

● (1540)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I join colleagues today in tabling a petition raising concern about a proposal from the Liberal-dominated finance committee to strip charitable status from all houses of worship. This was, in particular, recommendation 430.

The removal of charitable status from houses of worship would affect churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, gurdwaras and all houses of worship by removing “promotion of religion” as a legitimate purpose under charities law, and this would also result in a confiscation tax. The removal of charitable status, as recommended in recommendation 430, would lead to a confiscation tax, which would require these houses of worship to hand over their property to the government.

The member for Winnipeg North seems to think that this is a ridiculous proposal. He should talk to the Liberals on the finance committee. He should read that report, because it is a clear recommendation. It is one that Conservatives oppose, but it is one that, sadly, Liberals supported.

The petitioners call on this House and on the government to reject recommendation 430 and to protect freedom of religion and recognize the positive contribution of faith communities in this country.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, second, I am tabling a petition that raises significant concern about the existing euthanasia laws in Canada and in particular their pernicious effect on the quality of life of Canadians living with disabilities.

The petitioners observe that the existing euthanasia regime in Canada tacitly endorses the notion that life with disability is optional and by extension disposable. They note that offering medical assistance in dying, or euthanasia, as a “solution for disability or chronic illness” reduces incentives to improve treatment and care for those living with these conditions.

Finally, petitioners observe that disability advocates in Canada have uniformly expressed opposition to so-called “track 2” MAID.

Therefore, petitioners would like to see this House and the government protect all Canadians whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable by prohibiting euthanasia for those whose prognosis for natural death is more than six months.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that 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.): Mr. Speaker, once again I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

CANADA POST

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have received two notices of requests for an emergency debate concerning the same subject. Members will be invited to rise and make brief interventions in the order the requests were received.

The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to request an emergency debate on the government's proposal to dismantle Canada Post services and the growing national response to these deeply concerning changes.

Canada Post is older than Canada itself. It connects communities across this vast country and serves as a vital lifeline for hundreds of northern, indigenous and rural communities. At a time when our economy and sovereignty face mounting threats from Donald Trump, national institutions, such as Canada Post, are essential to our unity and our resilience.

Without a doubt, Canada Post is facing serious challenges. These challenges require thoughtful, transparent and inclusive solutions. Postal workers and their union have repeatedly put forward constructive proposals to modernize and strengthen the service, yet their voices have been ignored. In 2015, the Liberal Party promised to reverse Stephen Harper's plan to end door-to-door delivery. It called its approach “real change”.

In 2018, then minister Carla Qualtrough led a two-phase, evidence-based review of Canada Post and unveiled what she called a “renewed vision” for the corporation, one that pledged to put service to Canadians at the heart of its mandate.

However, that vision was never implemented, and that promise has since been abandoned. Without any mention during the last election campaign, and without any debate in the House, the government recently announced drastic cuts to Canada Post services, including ending daily home mail delivery, closing rural post offices and eliminating door-to-door delivery for millions of Canadians.

These changes would mean fewer services for Canadians and significant job losses at a time when unemployment remains high. They would also very much hurt businesses in this country, including small businesses. They would disproportionately harm seniors, persons with disabilities and residents of rural and remote communities, those who rely most on accessible, dependable postal services and who are least able to absorb the impact of these cuts.

What is more, the government made this announcement in the midst of collective bargaining negotiations between Canada Post and its workers. Dropping such a sweeping restructuring plan into the middle of that process is like dropping a bomb. It constitutes direct interference and shows a fundamental lack of respect for collective bargaining and workers' rights.

Tens of thousands of postal workers are now on picket lines across the country. Mail and parcels are not being processed or delivered, and post offices are closing. Today, on Parliament Hill, workers and allies rallied to defend good jobs and a strong, public postal service, reinvigorated with revenue streams for the future. They rally to send a clear message: Postal workers deserve better and Canadians deserve better.

The House must not remain silent. We must have a rigorous, honest and urgent discussion about the future of Canada Post and about how to protect and strengthen it, for the benefit of all Canadians.

That is why I am calling on the Speaker to grant an emergency debate on this critical issue for this most cherished institution.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, September 25, the Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement announced a major overhaul of Canada's postal services. Even though Canada Post and its employees have been negotiating for two years, the government intervened in the negotiations, leading to a general strike by postal workers, which has had a significant impact on the entire population.

People waiting for cheques from the Quebec government will have to go to a Quebec service centre to pick them up. There has been a negative impact on the distribution of medication outside major centres. Distribution services for thousands of small and medium-sized businesses have been shut down. Passports are stuck in post offices. The general election in Newfoundland and Labrador has been postponed. Municipal elections in Quebec are at risk. Some 55,000 Canada Post workers are on strike, wondering if they will still have a job tomorrow. All this because the government did not see fit to hold consultations.

That is why we believe it is essential to hold an emergency debate so that we can work together to find solutions to the conflict that began on September 25.

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. members for Vancouver Kingsway and Laurentides—Labelle for their interventions. How-

Speaker's Ruling

ever, I am not satisfied that this request meets the specific requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

[Translation]

That being said, I know that this is a subject of great interest to many members. I would therefore like to assure the House that I am open to reconsidering the request at a later date, if the situation warrants it.

* * *

• (1550)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

MEMBERS' ACCESS TO FEDERAL PENITENTIARY—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on September 15, 2025, by the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola concerning members' access to federal penitentiaries.

In raising the question of privilege, the member alleged that he and the member for Cloverdale—Langley City had been obstructed and treated disrespectfully during a visit to Fraser Valley Institution on July 28, 2025.

He argued that section 72 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act was enacted to enable members to supervise what is happening in penitentiaries. He also explained that this visit was made to fulfill his responsibilities, including his role as the opposition shadow minister for public safety.

The member admitted that he was granted access to the institution, but he asserted that the constant presence of an assistant warden, which was imposed despite his explicit request to visit the facility with uniformed correctional officers only, inhibited his conversations with staff and inmates by creating an intimidating environment and preventing candid discussion. The member stated that this obstruction interfered with his ability to fully prepare for the proceedings of the House, including the development of questions and motions, and lines of questioning at committee.

On September 16, the member for Cloverdale—Langley City rose in support of her colleague's allegations. She pointed out that members have a duty to directly oversee public institutions to ensure that incarcerated persons are treated with dignity and respect.

Speaker's Ruling

[Translation]

On September 18, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons responded. He stated that there was no clear connection between the members' visit to the penitentiary and their parliamentary duties. He noted that this visit was not officially sanctioned by the House or a committee. While the Parliamentary Secretary acknowledged that it was regrettable that the members believed they were not treated with due respect, he added that there were likely protocols in place to have visitors escorted. Since the members were allowed to enter and tour the facility, no intimidation or obstruction took place.

Before going any further, I believe it is appropriate to review the wording of section 72 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, which the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola referred to:

Every member of the House of Commons, every Senator and every judge of a court in Canada has the right to enter any penitentiary, visit any part of a penitentiary, and visit any inmate, with the consent of the inmate, subject to such reasonable limits as are prescribed for protecting the security of the penitentiary or the safety of persons.

[English]

The access to penitentiaries granted to parliamentarians and to judges, incidentally, is nothing new. In the United Kingdom, these visits are believed to have canonical origins that date back centuries. In Canada, they are mentioned in legislative provisions from before Confederation, as well as in Parliament's 1868 Penitentiary Act. At the time, the right to visit was granted not only to members of Parliament but also to many public office holders, including the Governor General, the lieutenant governors, the members of the federal cabinet and others. These visiting rights remained in place thereafter, set out in various laws, before being repealed in 1961. Parliamentarians' visits to federal penitentiaries subsequently fell under a directive of the commissioner of the correctional service.

Visiting rights were restored to statutory form in the current section 72 of the act with the overhaul of the prison law in 1992. Note that, while the bill was before Parliament, an amendment that would have given parliamentarians full access to any person in a penitentiary at any time was debated. However, the House rejected that proposal and passed the current wording.

In a ruling delivered on April 29, 1971, concerning a member who had been denied access to a penitentiary, which can be found on page 5338 of the Debates, Speaker Lamoureux offered the following explanation, and I quote:

On a number of occasions I have defined what I consider to be parliamentary privilege. Privilege is that which sets hon. members apart from other citizens giving them rights which the public do not possess. I suggest we should be careful in construing any particular circumstance which might add to the privileges which have been recognized over the years and perhaps over the centuries as belonging to members of the House of Commons.... It seems to me that the fact that the Penitentiary Act in the past, until 1961 I believe, did provide for a right on the part of members to make visits is an indication that if it were part of parliamentary privilege, it would not have been included in the statutes.

[Translation]

The right of parliamentarians to visit penitentiaries provided by section 72 of the act does not seem to fall within the bounds of par-

liamentary privilege. Consequently, the way members' visits to institutions are handled is not a matter for the Chair.

As for the allegation of obstruction by the assistant warden, in a decision handed down on February 26, 1975, which can be found on page 3580 of the Debates, Speaker Jerome stated the following:

...the classic definition of a question of privilege does not fit circumstances in which a member in his duties outside this House finds that his scope is being restricted or attempts are being made to restrict his scope of intervention and effective work on behalf of not only his own constituents but his point of view as a member of the federal Parliament.

As *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, explains on page 60:

Privilege essentially belongs to the House as a whole; individual Members can claim privilege only insofar as any denial of their rights, or threat made to them, would impede the functioning of the House. In addition, individual Members cannot claim privilege or immunity on matters that are unrelated to their functions in the House.

It further states the following on page 109:

While every Member has duties as a representative of the electorate, a Member may claim the protection of privilege relating only to his or her parliamentary functions, though the line distinguishing these duties might blur.

The threshold that must be met to find that a member was impeded in the performance of their parliamentary functions is intentionally set high, and the associated repercussions must be more than hypothetical. Not every activity that involves members' access to information necessarily meets this threshold. Merely stating that the information could be useful for a motion a member intends to move or a question they wish to ask is not enough to link it with House proceedings. The issue must be closely and directly related, or necessarily incidental, to the legislative or deliberative functions of the House or its members.

• (1555)

[English]

Furthermore, as regards the protection of members against obstruction in the performance of their functions, I would refer to the words of Speaker Bosley in a decision rendered on May 16, 1986, and printed on pages 13361 and 13362 of the Debates, in which he remarked that a threat or attempt to intimidate cannot be hypothetical; it must exist or have taken place. Therefore, the Chair cannot find that there is a *prima facie* question of privilege.

I understand the members' concerns and am not downplaying their importance, but the facts presented do not satisfy the strict criteria for finding a breach of parliamentary privilege. That said, while this matter does not constitute a *prima facie* question of privilege, our federal institutions, including penitentiaries, must nonetheless strive to facilitate the vital work of parliamentarians.

I thank all members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMBATTING HATE ACT

The House resumed from September 24 consideration of the motion 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.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with my limited time, I will do a bit of an overview. When we look at the issue of combatting hate, we see that the legislation is substantive and would in fact make a significant difference in our communities.

I would also suggest that one needs to look at the last election, where there was a commitment to bring forward legislation of this nature. I say that because the election was not that long ago. A new Prime Minister and new government were elected based on a series of commitments. Those commitments, at least in part, to date, have come in the form of legislation.

I could talk about Bill C-2, the stronger borders legislation; Bill C-4, the middle class tax break for Canadians; Bill C-5, the one Canada economy legislation; Bill C-8, the critical cyber-system legislation; or Bill C-9, which we are debating today, about hate crime. It is very real and very tangible.

With that mandate, not only the government was given a responsibility, but so were all opposition members. It was a very clear mandate given to all of us. Canadians want and expect that their parliamentarians here in Ottawa will work co-operatively in order to have legislation and budgetary measures pass through the system.

My appeal to all members of the House is to recognize the mandate that was given to us by Canadians: Legislation like we are debating today, other pieces of legislation that we have already introduced, or legislation such as our bail reform, which is going to be coming out shortly, should all be allowed to get to the committee stage. That is what is in the best interest of Canadians. This is not to limit debate, because we still have third reading and all sorts of debate and consultations that take place in our standing committees.

With respect to the legislation before us today, it is important that we recognize how much racism and hatred have increased over the last number of years. Race or ethnicity is number one in terms of hate, followed by religion and by sexual orientation. Those are the big three.

Hate happens every day in communities throughout Canada. It is one of the reasons it is so critically important that we not only recognize the legislation as a commitment that was part of our electoral platform but also recognize that communities are hurting and that the bill is legislation that would advance more peaceful communities. I would encourage all members to support it.

Government Orders

• (1600)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was here for the first part of the member for Winnipeg North's speech last week, and unfortunately, I was around for the end of it.

I have a simple question: Does the member take any responsibility for his party's action that has seen a massive rise in anti-Semitism in the country? There are attacks on churches and attacks on religions. Does he bear any responsibility, or does he believe it is just a coincidence that the massive rise in hate just happens to coincide with the 10 years the Liberals have been in government?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as a government, it is important to look at the actions we can take to minimize hate, such as bringing forward legislation of this nature. Whether it was the previous government or even the Harper government that started an escalation of hatred, we always have to put things into the proper context of time. There are world events that take place. We can look at what is happening in the Middle East. These are very real, live things that are having an impact in the communities we represent. That is why it is important we recognize the legislation for what—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Repentigny has the floor.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, we have often said that we want to move this bill forward and work on it in committee. However, it is important for us to remind the House that we have concerns, particularly with respect to the right to protest. In Quebec, we have a long history of peaceful protests.

I would like my colleague to tell us at what point he thinks it could become a crime to obstruct access to a place. We see it as a slippery slope. Does my colleague have the same concerns? Where do we draw the line? At what point is someone obstructing access to a place?

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am a very strong advocate for the Canadian Charter of Rights. I respect our democratic principles, one of which is being able to protest. What I do not respect are hate-motivated protests targeted against a particular ethnic or religious group. I have very little or zero tolerance. I do not believe one should, for example, prevent an individual from being able to go to a place of worship or faith, whether a synagogue or a mosque. I think it is an expectation that people should feel safe to be able to attend things of that nature.

• (1605)

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on September 16, I got a note from Sarabjit Kaur of Abbotsford, because there were hateful comments made around the Nagar Kirtan they had in Abbotsford. She said, "What is the RCMP and other bodies doing about all these hateful things going on? I feel so unsafe about sending our kids out to school. Do you think schools like the Dasmesh School and Khalsa School should have more security in place?"

Government Orders

I would like to ask the hon. member for Winnipeg North to comment and to give a message to Sarabjit as to why the bill is more important than the Conservatives think.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, whether it is my friend and colleague who just raised the question; the Prime Minister, who has made comments on it; or the general feeling not only within the Liberal caucus but also among many others, people have a right to feel safe to be able to participate in the things my friend and colleague just referenced.

Whether it is a Nagar Kirtan or going to a gurdwara, these are things that are a part of who we are, and we should be celebrating them. We should not have to tolerate targeted hate messaging. We need, collectively, to make a strong statement, and the type of legislation that is before us at least is an important step in doing just that.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I would say this to my hon. colleague: We are trying to combat hate, and this is prompted by a question that was asked earlier, but why do we not go after rage farming and the algorithms, bring back the digital services tax and really deal with the threat that promotes hatred?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Internet in many ways has been such a wonderful thing in terms of advancement of our communities, society and the world in general, but there are a lot of negatives. The rage and hatred we see through different forms of the Internet is something that concerns me, and I suspect it concerns a great number of people. Looking for ideas on how we can minimize the negatives of the Internet is something that I am always open to listening to, at the very least.

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House of Commons to speak to Bill C-9, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places.

I will be splitting my time with my dear friend, the member of Parliament for Bowmanville—Oshawa North.

I will speak about Gardiner and Voltaire: one an English journalist and the other a French satirist. A.G. Gardiner, in his essay *On the Rule of the Road*, put it plainly: One's freedom ends where the other person's nose begins. One's right to swing their fist ends when it collides with another's safety. To live together, we accept this social contract, curbing certain impulses so that everyone may move freely. Gardiner used simple ideas like the limits of playing a trombone at midnight to illustrate the point.

True freedom comes with the responsibilities of restraint, rules and tolerance. Without responsibilities, liberties clash and dissolve into anarchy, where no one is free. With these responsibilities, we achieve freedom for all, including minorities.

Voltaire, in his writings and satire, came to the same truth from another perspective. For him, freedom of speech was the lifeblood of progress. A society advances when ideas, even unpopular ones, can be expressed and tested. He fought censorship, knowing that suppression is always the tool of tyranny. A phrase often attributed to him, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it", was in fact penned later by Evelyn Beatrice

Hall. Voltaire defended free expression, while rejecting incitement, libel and sedition, insisting that open dialogue is the only safeguard of liberty.

Taken together, Gardiner and Voltaire remind us that freedom lives in the balance in between. Without restraint, it collapses into anarchy, and without expression, into tyranny. It is against this balance that we must measure the state of our country today.

Taking into account the understanding that Gardiner and Voltaire provide us with, let us chart out Canada in the last decade and provide three principal critiques of Bill C-9. The hate crime legislation before us right now is legislation that we should have been debating several years ago. We will take no lessons from Liberals when it comes to fighting hate. Let us talk about the last decade.

Since 2015, when the Liberals took office, hate crimes have gone up 258%, police-reported hate crimes have increased six years in a row and anti-Semitic hate crimes are up 416%. We have a government in place that has allowed Jewish Canadians, who account for less than 1% of our population, to become the most-targeted minority in our country. Seventy per cent of all hate crimes are targeted at less than 1% of the population. It is a government that, for far too long, has decided to place political expediency over moral clarity, choosing appeasement over principle.

A synagogue was fire-bombed twice in one year. Two Jewish schools were shot up. A bomb threat targeted Jewish institutions across Canada. A Jewish man was assaulted in a Montreal park. A Jewish woman was stabbed in the kosher section of an Ottawa Loblaw's. The government's announcement, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, of granting a state to the people who practise state terror as statecraft, emboldening mobs and violence upon our Jewish communities, is just the latest example.

It has been a decade of waiting for the rule of law over mob rule. Christians across our country have been subjected to over 100 church bombings and attacks. Communities are divided against one another as political projects of Liberals, rather than as a country being raised on the basis of the rule of law for all its people. Truckers took to our streets to protest for their rights and freedoms, as the Prime Minister then betrayed civil liberty and sowed distrust in our financial institutions, calling those very protesters seditious.

Trust is broken in this country. Our institutions, whether media, bureaucratic, judicial, financial or academic, have all been subjected to radical conformity, not critical thinking. The rot of one ideology as supreme against all others has shaken the confidence of Canadians, and restoring that trust requires much more than the performance art and virtue signalling that much of Bill C-9 presents.

• (1610)

The same Liberal members of Parliament who stood and watched as trust eroded and communities were torn apart stand here today to claim that they have solutions for the very problems they caused. They claim they have majestically changed since their new Prime Minister took office. We cannot forget the damage and division they sowed, the trust they have broken.

It is against the backdrop of the rising hate and violence the Liberals have caused that I offer three principal critiques of Bill C-9. First is the removal of the Attorney General from the process of approving charges for hate crimes. The requirement for AG consent has long served as a safeguard against abuse and as a means for accountability. By removing that oversight, the government would risk giving unelected bureaucrats unchecked discretion over prosecutions, paving the way for radical ideological judges.

My friend, the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, put it best on September 24:

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.

Second is a question of identity. Where the bill currently refers to the protection of identity, it shifts attention away from protecting individual dignity. This carve-out from free speech would give Liberals the opportunity to define what they do not like as hate speech. Identities and human association are complex and subjective, but the concepts of the individual's rights and dignity are objective. Our laws should defend every Canadian against intimidation, harassment and violence, not protect abstract categories that are open to interpretation.

Third, another concern with Bill C-9 is its approach to defining "hate" itself. As drafted and as the government indicates, the bill would codify the Supreme Court of Canada's definition of "hatred" as "detestation or vilification". On its face this seems consistent, but by removing the word "extreme", the government would lower the legal threshold, enabling police to lay a multitude of charges with less scrutiny and less investigation. In practice, this would risk opening the floodgates to inconsistent prosecution and litigation. This is the kind of overreach we have come to expect in the United Kingdom, but not here in Canada. The Conservatives are the party of free speech, not the party of prosecuting those whose speech we do not agree with.

There is a lot at stake in Bill C-9. We must resist the left's troubling argument that words alone constitute violence. Words are words. Violence is violence. Conflating the two licenses the idea that real violence is a legitimate response to speech, a principle that is both dangerous and indefensible. The only correct response to offensive or hateful words is more words and more debate.

If there has been a rise in hate in Canada, it is not because we fail to police speech; it is because we fail to police actions: barricading neighbourhoods, assaulting members of religious minorities, burning down churches, shooting up synagogues or vandalizing minority-held businesses. It is because we have a government that sows division, pitting one community against another, and that treats one

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speech as sacrosanct and the other as seditious. It is because our government does not have the resources to act and because the Liberals have created a justice system that lets offenders walk back on to our streets.

The solution to violence is enforcement of the law by police and by courts, accountability for wrongdoers and genuine condemnation by public officials, none of which we have seen. Bill C-9, as written, falls short. As hate crimes have risen across this land, successive public safety and justice ministers have failed to bring focus to the source of these crimes. They have failed to provide both legal and moral leadership to stand against the mob and call for civility in Canada, honouring what Gardiner and Voltaire described. Without them, violent crimes go unchecked.

It is time to jail the haters, not for what they say, but for what they do. Bill C-9 fails to strike the balance Canadians expect. Despite having had the support of the Conservatives since the election, the Liberals only table a law that would essentially repurpose an existing law and would contribute very little to dealing with one of the biggest crises our country has to confront. We must confront hatred with the rule of law and the love of liberty. We must protect Canadians from violence, not expose them to arbitrary prosecutions. We must hold the government accountable for legislation that leaves our communities vulnerable.

That is our responsibility. That is our commitment. That is the standard Canadians expect.

• (1615)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us perhaps look in the mirror. The Conservative leader associated with the conspiracy theory convoy. He has used misogynistic keywords in his party's propaganda. He has associated with the alt-right extremist and white supremacist-adjacent group Diagonol. His party spent years appeasing the Conservative Party base, bringing nothing to the table but division and conflict.

What responsibility does the Conservative Party and its leader have for the growing hate and division in Canada?

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Madam Speaker, the hon. member should look in the mirror.

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This is a government that has spent the last decade dividing Hindus and Sikhs against one another. This is a government that has failed to utter a single word of strength against a majority of hate crimes being levelled against less than 1% of our population. More than 70% of all hate crimes across the country are focused on less than 1% of the population.

Over the last year, what has the government done? It has accelerated hate and poured gas onto the fire. Synagogues have been bombed, schools have been shot and communities have been threatened.

Conservatives will take no lessons from Liberals on what it takes to confront hate when they are the ones who have been promoting it all along.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague was not yet a member of this place or living in Ottawa during the convoy, but I do not think he fully recognizes how awful it was for local businesses and local residents to not be able to sleep and to have horns blowing all the time. We sat in this chamber not knowing if the trucks outside were loaded with explosives.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, no one knew what was in those vehicles. I was told by the RCMP that I needed an escort to get in and out of the building because my face was too well known and that I would not be safe trying to get into the building. The buses were not running. The taxis were not running. It was not safe to walk through a crowd.

Does the hon. member really think that was an acceptable situation for Parliament?

• (1620)

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Madam Speaker, let me offer this. It is true that at the time, I was not in the chamber. I did not represent the great people of Calgary Heritage. At the time, I was a writer, a thought leader, at a place called the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

I happened to be in Ottawa at the time of the convoy protest, and I decided to take a look for myself to see exactly what was involved. I walked from one end to the other. I probably encountered a bit too much beer and weed for my taste, but I will tell members that this was a peaceful protest. These were authentic people fighting for their freedoms and doing so in the best interests of our country and our communities.

They were diminished by the farce of what was proposed, the Emergencies Act, against them and against the freedoms of Canadians, freedoms that were shaken in our financial systems with subjective enforcement of the rule of law. These things need to be confronted and should never again be permitted to happen.

Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville—Oshawa North, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have heard from many members of Canada's Hindu community across Durham Region who are concerned that, through Bill C-9, the Liberal government is associating one of their sacred symbols with hate. Has the member for Calgary Heritage heard the same concerns?

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his incredible work on restoring trust among our young people and trust between communities.

The Nazi hooked cross was culturally appropriated from the ancient civilization of Hindus and Indians. People of Indian origin and Hindu faith have often seen that symbol, the swastika, as it is properly known, as a symbol of peace, love and prosperity. When the Nazis culturally appropriated it and made it famous as a symbol of hate, they chose to do something terrible in this country.

In how we speak about hate crimes and hate symbols, it is so important for us to learn this lesson of history, to classify the hooked cross of the Nazis correctly, to defend our Hindu community and to defend our—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Madam Speaker, since we are talking about hate speech, I would like to ask my colleague whether he agrees with this religious exemption.

Does he agree that certain elements of the Criminal Code can be recognized as hate speech, but that, as long as such speech is religiously motivated, it can be exempted, risk free? Does my colleague think that makes sense?

[English]

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Madam Speaker, I am looking forward to discussing these issues with hon. members and with my colleagues in the Bloc. I know we will have an opportunity to do so at committee.

[Translation]

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 Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Employment; the hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, Firearms; the hon. member for Calgary Centre, Finance.

[English]

Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville—Oshawa North, CPC): Madam Speaker, freedom of expression is a special part of Canada's political and cultural tradition. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms says that everyone in our country has the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression. When any government seeks to limit or constrain these freedoms, it requires a special trust between the people of the country and that government. Ideally, the people know that when a government seeks to limit their expression, that government has their best interests in mind and that any effort to limit freedom of expression would be done so fairly and justly.

Today, the Liberal government does not have that trust with many Canadians, and it is important that we understand why as we debate the merits of Bill C-9, in which the Liberal government is proposing new ways of limiting free expression in our dear country. A government that is deserving of trust would, of course, be one that is honest with the people of the country. Unfortunately, that is not the case with Bill C-9. Much of this legislation is duplicative of laws already on the books and does not adequately address the core reasons crime has increased.

The problem of crime primarily requires the federal government to more earnestly enforce the laws we already have and support police officers to investigate crimes and lock up criminals. The Liberal government is, frankly, taking attention away from its very real enforcement problem as it pertains to criminal law and the justice system. Instead, it is distracting people with legislation and, in doing so, is not being straight up with the people of our country.

A government that is deserving of trust with legislation like Bill C-9 would be a government that treats all religious communities fairly, and that is not the case. In the rollout of Bill C-9, the Liberal government failed to mention anti-Christian bigotry in explaining how this legislation would address increases in hate in our country. Of course, anti-Christian bigotry has risen dramatically in recent years, as evidenced by over 100 churches being burned down or vandalized. In fact, the government's statements about Bill C-9 seem to go very far out of their way to avoid mentioning Christians and to avoid mentioning what has been happening to Christian communities across our country, despite mentioning other targeted communities.

This is not a surprise to me, and probably not to many in this chamber, as when the Liberal government had an opportunity last year to support Conservative legislation to increase the penalty for arson against churches, which was known as Bill C-411, the Liberal government did nothing. It did not step up to work with us. It did not even articulate support for our efforts. We may recall Bill C-411, introduced by my Conservative colleague from Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, introduced mandatory minimum sentences for criminals attacking churches. It was a fantastic idea and an important part of any meaningful response to what has happened to churches across our country.

Despite claims by the current Liberal government that it is something new and different from what we contended with last year, it continues to take the exact same approach to how it deals with Christians in our country, continuing to refuse to step up and take any action. Ultimately, it is important for Christians and non-Christians across our beautiful nation to ask why the Liberals seem unwilling to address the attacks on churches in Bill C-9, Bill C-411 or any bill for that matter. If we are being very honest, I think the answer is that the Liberals like to use their power in government to pick winners and losers. They like to decide who deserves attention and protection, who deserves to have their dignity affirmed and who does not.

• (1625)

Liberals, frankly, do not see Christians as deserving of protection, and Bill C-9 is a very clear example of that, plain and simple, on paper. With that in mind, it is difficult to trust the Liberals to ap-

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ply these new powers they seek to limit free expression in a way that is fair, just and the same for all Canadians. I anticipate Liberals saying that Bill C-9 is responding to the needs of religious communities by including language for the protection of Canadians who attend places of worship. Believe me, Madam Speaker: I would very much like to see more protections for Canadians who attend places of worship. In August, I submitted a motion to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to discuss precisely this issue.

However, my concern with Bill C-9 is that the Liberals are taking a very real issue, which is that Canadians who attend places of worship need more protections, and using that very real issue to justify the expansion of their government's power to define what constitutes acceptable speech. Liberals have demonstrated, over their last decade in power, an intolerance for Christians and other Canadians who may disagree with them on important social and cultural issues. For that reason, I worry that the government will use the new powers it seeks under Bill C-9 to make it even more difficult for people in our great country to freely practise their faith.

Importantly, it is not just Christians who have concerns about being excluded from Bill C-9; Hindus across our country do as well. I have personally heard from many Hindu Canadians in Bowmanville—Oshawa North and across Durham region, who have expressed concerns over how some of their religious symbols have been characterized in Bill C-9. There is concern for many in the Hindu community that the proposed legislation equates one of their sacred symbols with a symbol of hatred. They are not being treated fairly by the Liberal government either.

Finally, it is very important to note another reason many Canadians do not trust the Liberal government. Under the Liberals' watch, the justice system has become weak and ineffective at protecting our communities. To have a trusting relationship with the public, especially if it has the audacity to ask the public to allow it to limit their free expression even further, the Liberal government should prove that it is willing to listen to cries for help from police officers asking for important justice reforms. Many criminals, whether they are motivated by hate or something else, could be off the street right now if the core problems in the justice system were adequately addressed. Canada needs a justice system that will be tougher on criminals, and that means having real consequences for breaking the law and hurting our people.

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I would like to share the words of Durham region's police chief, Peter Moreira, who offered a powerful statement on the topic of justice reform a couple of days ago. He said, "we must establish meaningful consequences that deter convicted individuals from re-offending. Offenders who endanger the public—whether through the use of weapons, threats or reckless driving—should be remanded into custody. Breaching bail conditions should disqualify individuals from future bail, especially when it's their third, fourth, or subsequent release. Bill C-75 began this dangerous trend of multiple releases.... We need justice reform that prioritizes the rights of law-abiding citizens over the 'rights' of repeat offenders."

In conclusion, it is obvious to anyone paying attention why Canadians would be uncomfortable with the Liberal government asking for more power over our lives, and their time would be better spent trying to fix the justice system they have broken.

• (1630)

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I take great offence to this member coming into the House and trying to suggest that he represents the voice of all Christians. As an individual who is a Christian myself, who was raised in a family that attended service every Sunday, who has their own children in a Christian school and who values Christian beliefs and educates their children to support those beliefs, I take great offence to this member somehow suggesting that my place of worship would not be properly taken care of in this piece of proposed legislation if an event were to happen that is much like the other events he referred to. Based on the language he is using, I would say that this member, and Conservatives, is trying to drive a divide between religions.

Very simply, can the member please explain to me where in the legislation my place of worship, a Christian place of worship, would not be properly taken care of whereas another place of worship would be? Where is it in the legislation?

Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, it sounds as though I have offended the member opposite. Have I committed a hate crime now? Am I in trouble in terms of Bill C-9 because I have offended this gentleman?

The reality is that instead of throwing all this vitriol toward me, he should ask his colleagues why they have left Christians and anti-Christian bigotry out of any of their public statements concerning Bill C-9. He should ask his colleagues why they refuse to acknowledge over 100 churches being burned down across our country. They will not lift a finger to do anything about it, even when we have given them plenty of opportunity.

Save your energy and direct it to your own side of the aisle.

• (1635)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I hope the hon. member is not talking about me. My energy is quite well saved.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Jonquière.

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I find that genuinely fascinating. My colleague is saying that he speaks on be-

half of Christians and that he represents Christians. According to him, in the bill, Christians, like people of any other faith, should be defended by members of Parliament. Personally, I believe all religions should be treated equally.

In that regard, does my colleague not think it is necessary to amend Bill C-9 to ensure that hate crimes based on religious speech are prohibited?

I imagine my colleague will agree with that.

[*English*]

Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, once again, all I am asking for is for Christians to be treated the same as everybody else, yet we can see the kind of reaction we get. Just saying the word "Christian" invokes a certain kind of energy in people in this chamber. I am very curious as to why that is.

If the Liberal government introduces legislation, names a series of communities it is supposed to help but leaves Christians out, why am I the bad guy for mentioning it? Come on, get serious.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I hope the hon. member remembers that he has to speak through the Chair and not direct comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have to express the same concerns that my colleague has about the government with the Christian faith. We have seen innumerable churches being attacked, vandalized and burned down. Just recently, there was a historic one in Alberta. When this came up previously, former prime minister Trudeau said it was fully understandable that people were burning down churches.

Does my colleague believe, as the Liberals have said, that it is standing up for this faith to say that it is fully understandable for Christian churches to be burned to the ground?

Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, my colleague points to something very important for us to acknowledge: The effort by the Liberal government to downplay and dismiss anti-Christian bigotry is part of a much larger, broader pattern of behaviour to diminish the place of Christians and their feelings in our democracy. It has also introduced new ideas to take away charitable status from religious organizations. We have seen numerous petitions brought forward in the House to draw attention to that. We have given the Liberal government numerous opportunities to clearly state that it is going to protect the charitable status of religious organizations. It refuses to do so.

This is a deep-rooted problem in the Liberal government. We can see why it is such a sensitive spot to bring up.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Before we resume debate, I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-210, an act respecting Ukrainian heritage month.

* * *

COMBATTING HATE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion 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.

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Nunavut.

[Translation]

Today, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-9, which proposes reforms to the Criminal Code to better protect access to religious and cultural sites and combat the rise of hate in Canada at a critical time.

In 2014, the police recorded 1,295 hate crimes. By 2024, that number had risen sharply to 4,882. Hate crimes motivated by race or ethnicity saw a particularly sharp increase, rising from 611 cases in 2014 to 2,377 cases in 2024. Similarly, hate crimes based on religion increased significantly, from 429 cases in 2014 to 1,342 cases in 2024.

Since 2020, the Black community has been the most frequently targeted population for hate crimes motivated by race or ethnicity, accounting for 37% of hate crimes in 2024. In 2024, most police-reported hate crimes targeting religion were directed at the Jewish community at 68% and the Muslim community at 17%.

These figures and statistics tell only part of the story. The sad reality is that no community is immune to hate. We continue to hear that Canadians no longer feel safe in places of worship, learning and gathering, or in simple day-to-day life. The government is deeply concerned about this situation and has been very clear that it will take successive measures to improve public safety. Bill C-9 is the next step in this regard.

Let me be very clear. Regardless of an individual's background or who they are, if Canada is their home, then they deserve to live here in peace and free of hatred.

● (1640)

[English]

Media reports also continue to highlight the human cost of the spread of hate in our communities. I wish I could say the examples are few. Within the past two years, reports on threats and attacks at places of worship, community centres and religious schools, as well as hate-motivated crime more generally, continue to become more commonplace.

To take but a few examples, reporting from Global News, CBC and the Montreal Gazette during this time includes shootings and

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attacks on and at synagogues and mosques, evacuations of Jewish schools and Muslim community centres because of bomb threats and reports of attacks against Muslim taxi drivers and women wearing a hijab.

While these particular media stories focus on anti-Semitic and Islamophobic incidents, we know members of other communities in Canada share similar experiences of hate-motivated conduct, including because they are indigenous, because of the colour of their skin, because of the god they worship or because of who they love. I want to be clear: These incidents are abhorrent and do not reflect the values of Canadian society.

While Canada will always be a place to come together and, at times, disagree on issues, there is no place for intimidation and violence in our homes or where communities gather.

[Translation]

This disturbing rise in hate in Canada, and indeed around the world, must be met with strong condemnation and unity.

At this point, I want to assure my colleagues and all Canadians that there will always be room to have difficult conversations and express our disagreement, and that includes exercising freedom of expression and putting it into practice during lawful protests.

While this bill is a robust response to hateful behaviour, the proposed reforms have been carefully designed to ensure that freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are not unreasonably restricted. This bill does not prevent anyone from protesting or expressing opinions or concerns about an issue.

I would like to take a few minutes to discuss the measures proposed in Bill C-9 to demonstrate how they will support the legal system in responding to these disturbing trends, while respecting our shared rights and values.

Bill C-9 proposes to enact four new Criminal Code offences that will provide clear but appropriate tools for investigators, Crown prosecutors and judges assigned to cases involving these offences.

To address reports of intimidation, harassment, threats and violence at neighbouring religious and cultural institutions, Bill C-9 proposes to create a specific intimidation offence that prohibits any conduct aimed at instilling fear in someone for the purpose of impeding access to their place of worship or to a place primarily used by an identifiable group for certain purposes.

The bill also proposes to create an offence prohibiting anyone from intentionally impeding access to those same places.

These two new proposed offences will help ensure that police have clear tools to intervene when the behaviour of certain individuals crosses a line and becomes criminal activity in relation to these places.

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To be clear, nothing in the two proposed offences would prohibit or restrict the right of individuals to protest in or near these places. These offences apply to criminal conduct. Threats of violence are not forms of peaceful expression or assembly protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

For example, if anyone attempts to disrupt a peaceful protest through violence, police can respond appropriately without infringing on the rights of the protesters to express their opinion on a particular issue.

To be clear on this point, the bill specifically includes a defence for any person who attends at or near a place for the sole purpose of obtaining or communicating information. This type of defence already exists for similar offences and its application is clear and well known in the context of protests and picketing activities. As long as it is done in a peaceful manner and access to the place is not significantly impacted, this behaviour would not be targeted by the new proposed offence.

The bill also proposes creating a new hate propaganda offence related to the public display of certain hate and terrorist symbols. I want to assure my colleagues that this is not a blanket ban on symbols, but rather an offence of limited scope that applies exclusively to the public display of symbols deliberately used to promote hate targeting identifiable groups. The offence has been carefully worded and will not apply to public displays of such symbols for legitimate purposes, such as journalistic, educational or artistic purposes.

In addition to these specific offences, Bill C-9 also proposes to create a new hate crime offence. To address the overall rise of hate in Canada, this new offence would strongly denounce and deter all hate-motivated crimes. This is an important new tool for police and Crown prosecutors across the country.

The new hate crime offence would make it a criminal offence to commit unlawful acts motivated by hate based on such grounds as race, ethnic origin, religion or sex. It would apply generally to the commission of an offence under the Criminal Code or an act of Parliament and would include stiffer penalties depending on the severity of the offence.

• (1645)

[English]

Bill C-9 strengthens Canada's legal arsenal against hatred and sends a clear signal that hate has no place in our communities. It is the sincere hope of this government and myself that we can come together to consider and study this bill with the aim of making Canada a safer place for all people who live here.

[Translation]

I urge all members to join me in supporting these essential measures.

[English]

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not know if the parliamentary secretary has a copy of the Criminal Code handy, but I know she is a lawyer, and I want to ask her whether she agrees that hate symbols are already covered under subsection 319(2) of the Criminal Code, which pertains to the wilful promotion of hatred, by virtue of the list enumer-

ated in subsection 319(7) of the Criminal Code, which talks about communicating “statements”, which have been interpreted by the courts as very broad and including symbols.

Would the parliamentary secretary acknowledge that?

• (1650)

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, I do not have the Criminal Code with me, but I would tell my colleague opposite that the intent of this law is to regulate and legislate people who have the wilful intent to obstruct and intimidate people who want access to places of worship, religion, community centres and schools.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, intimidation-related offences are probably one of the most urgent issues right now. We see that with online bullying. Bill C-9 is relatively weak. We in the Bloc believe it could go further in that regard. Obviously, we will be proposing amendments to that effect in committee.

I would like to know why the government seems to have limited its own ability to intervene in order to prevent offences, particularly with regard to online bullying and intimidation.

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, of course, once this bill is being studied at committee, our colleagues will have the opportunity to discuss it and hear from experts on these topics.

We believe that this bill will be well received. I hope the Bloc Québécois will support it so that we can pass and implement this bill.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate many of the comments that my colleague has put on the record. I wonder if she could amplify one fact. We made an election commitment to bring forward legislation of this nature. One of the things we have been very aggressive on with the new Prime Minister and the new government is looking at legislative measures that support our election platform, whether it is the tax break, the one Canadian economy or bail reform.

Can the parliamentary secretary comment on how important it is that this legislation go to the committee stage as part of our platform?

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, as mentioned in my speech, we have seen a rise in hate crime in the last few years, and it is time that this question be addressed and that we adopt this law to be able to protect Canadians from coast to coast to coast. This is a platform promise that we made and that this government engaged itself in, and we intend for this legislation to see the light of day.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, as I look at this legislation, I have to agree with the Conservative MP who earlier asked the hon. member if we did not agree that the Criminal Code already covers the offences that are described in this bill relating to symbols. As we are looking at the question of limiting free speech or accidental inferences that there is a hate crime being committed, I would ask the hon. member if those on the Liberal benches could put forward a clear explanation of what additional protections this bill offers that were not already covered by existing hate crime laws.

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, the Criminal Code currently contains four hate propaganda offences in sections 318 to 319. The bill proposes to create a new, fifth, hate propaganda offence that would make it a crime to wilfully promote hatred against any identifiable group by publicly displaying certain symbols, including symbols principally used by association with terrorist entities that are listed under the Criminal Code, such as the swastika, the Nazi double rune, also known as the SS bolts—

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

The hon. member for Nunavut.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I join this debate on Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, as the voice of Nunavut and as a member of the NDP.

The NDP believes the federal government must take comprehensive action to fight the rising tide of hate in Canada. Almost 5,000 hate crimes were reported in 2024. Police-reported hate crimes motivated by race or ethnicity are up 19% from 2022. Yes, we need to combat hate, but we do not need to criminalize people speaking up, and we definitely do not need to keep them jailed for longer.

I am disappointed that this bill does not address the violent activities of the growing white nationalist movement. The Liberals' failure to include that aspect in this bill leaves racialized communities, indigenous communities and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community without the necessary tools to combat the largest source of hatred in Canada.

We are in polarizing times, for many reasons. People are either for or against Palestine. They are either for or against Israel. Indeed, our political system is getting close to only being Liberal or Conservative. Our public discourse must not give us fear that we will be criminalized. Our religious beliefs should not spread hate. This bill seems to be more about criminalizing people who speak out than it is about addressing the growing racism against racialized people.

There are existing laws that address hate, calling into question the real purpose of this bill. Hate is already an aggravating factor in sentencing. This bill would increase maximum sentences if an offence is motivated by hate. What would that raise sentences to? It would raise them to five years, 10 years, 14 years and even up to life imprisonment. We are entering a debate where imprisonment is made easier and made longer when, at the same time, we are hearing about an impending austerity budget.

In fact, there are already existing provisions in the Criminal Code addressing situations involving a crime near places of wor-

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ship. I draw members' attention to the following sections in the Criminal Code: subsection 176(2), "Disturbing religious worship or certain meetings"; subsection 430(4.1), "Mischief relating to religious property"; section 264, "Criminal harassment"; section 264.1, "Uttering threats"; and section 423, "Intimidation".

New Democrats are concerned with vague language in this bill, because once broad definitions are on the books, they can easily be weaponized against groups. For example, how will intimidating behaviours be interpreted by police? In its current form, the bill has the potential to criminalize peaceful protesters and legitimate dissent. This bill, in its current form, gives too much discretionary power to law enforcement, allowing for subjectivity.

We know that listing groups on the terror list is a highly political decision, ultimately up to cabinet discretion. New Democrats are concerned that the section of this bill dealing with hate symbols would create a risk that a future government could put forward a new terror list for political purposes to appease certain groups that could then be caught under this provision.

Let me break down some of these concerns a bit more. Surrounding law enforcement, it gives too much discretionary power to law enforcement, allowing for subjectivity. Charging people with a hate crime carries a stigma that follows the person for life. If the charge is later dropped, the stigma will remain with the person.

● (1655)

There is the issue of vagueness. What are intimidating behaviours? How will they be defined or interpreted by police? Once broad definitions are on the books, they can be easily weaponized against groups. Hate is already an aggravating factor in the Criminal Code of Canada, as I said earlier. An assault committed out of hatred means the sentence would already be higher than it would be otherwise. This new offence would put the consequences of hatred in the hands of the police's subjective process rather than in those of the sentencing judge.

Second, we have a huge American influence. Advocates want tools that would target groups that openly espouse hatred and racism, would make it illegal to conduct any sort of militant training, for example MMA fight clubs, and would address the business component that allows these groups to become incorporated and therefore fundraise.

On the banning of symbols, other than the swastika and SS bolts, symbols would depend on Canada's terror list. Listing groups on the terror list is a highly political decision that is ultimately up to cabinet's discretion. This creates a risk that a future government could put forward a new terror list for political purposes to appease certain groups that could then be caught under this provision.

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The wilful promotion of hatred is already an offence in Canada. The use of the swastika can already be processed through crimes currently on the books. The Liberals adding the Supreme Court of Canada's definition of "hatred" to the Criminal Code is not the issue. Courts already use this definition, and nothing would change with this addition. The escalating punishment after each offence for someone convicted of the new hate crime would be excessive and disproportionate.

On the new state of fear threshold, Canada already has a system where we recognize that free speech can go too far and cross a line, like when it incites violence against an identifiable group. This bill would lower that threshold and focuses on elements that are easily politically influenced, like which groups we can and cannot talk about in public. That makes the New Democrats and civil liberties associations nervous.

This crime has the element of intent to provoke a state of fear before going into a specific location. How will these locations be easily identifiable? The definition is too broad. This would cause problems in terms of scope and clarity for peaceful protesters. Provisions are vague, creating the potential for arbitrariness. We should be worried about how police would interpret the bill and about creating a further backlog in the already overburdened criminal justice system.

On freedom of assembly, while freedom of assembly is protected under the charter, with the broad definition of "fear", any protest that is loud enough or disruptive enough would be seen as meeting this criterion.

In the context of the upcoming November budget, the austerity measures the Prime Minister has told us to expect will impact the justice system, potentially with cuts to public prosecution offices. At the same time, this bill would take away some roles of the Attorney General. The Liberals are making cuts to budgets and at the same time are giving departments more power.

With all the alarm bells going off about this bill, the NDP cannot support it in its current form. We will ensure that amendments are submitted—

• (1700)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We have to go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas.

• (1705)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the NDP member for bringing up the issue of white nationalist hatred in Canada.

Hamilton recently had a white supremacist mass-deportation protest that was deeply troubling to our community. Even more troubling is that it mirrors Conservative rhetoric, which is anti-immigrant and anti-migrant propaganda, further mirroring the trends we are seeing in the U.S.'s Trump and MAGA authoritarian regime.

The Conservative leader was personally associated with a white nationalist-adjacent group, Diagon. What further steps do we need to take in Canada to eliminate white nationalist hatred? Also,

what can we do to stop the importation of Trump-style U.S. political movements in Canada?

Andrew Lawton: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I believe the hon. member was making some pretty baseless smears about Conservatives in general, and I am wondering if this is in keeping with how the Liberals view free speech and how they want to weaponize the process against people who—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that I am not going to start that debate in the chamber.

I am going to give the hon. member for Nunavut an opportunity to answer.

Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, as I said in my speech, we are in quite interesting times. The American influence is quite strong. As rightly pointed out, the "freedom convoy" was the biggest indicator of that. We saw how unsafe we all felt during the "freedom convoy" and how American influence seeped so deeply into Canadian discourse.

We need to make sure that we continue to fund news like the CBC that gives us facts. We need to make sure that we continue to implement the TRC calls to action and the MMIWG calls for justice. A lot of tools have already been given to the Liberal government to help make sure that we are talking more about what Canada can do to address symbols of hate and address what we need to do as Canadians so that we—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Let us go to more questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Jonquière.

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague, and I am concerned about this situation, specifically that some of the most despicable aspects of American politics can sometimes slide into Canadian politics, particularly among groups that have a narrow interpretation of nationalism and do not always have good intentions.

However, there is another issue that cannot be ignored, and that is the rise of religious fundamentalism. This rise of religious fundamentalism exists in Europe and pretty much everywhere. I wonder if my colleague is concerned, as I am, that right now, people can brandish symbols of hatred if it is in the name of religion.

[English]

Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, I am concerned about a lot of things. Being Inuk, I know that religion was used against me and my people to take my language and culture away, so my views on religion might not be the same as what is in my colleague's question.

I know that when we are talking about making a better future for our children and our grandchildren, we need to base that on having faith in knowing that the decisions we are making are for their future so that we do not continue to damage not just the environment but the social communities and global community we have. We need more discourse about how to have a geopolitical environment that allows us to support each other so we can continue to support places like Ukraine and the people of Palestine, who are suffering a great genocide. We need to do a better job helping each other, for humanity.

• (1710)

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, is the hon. member certain that this bill would really help as intended?

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I am not too sure what the question is, but I will quote what one of the member's Conservative colleagues said: "It is time to jail the haters." We need to be careful about what we discuss and do as lawmakers. We need to make sure we address hate by having discussions, public conversations, about why we need to support each other, not spread hate about each other.

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

Our society has changed in recent years. Change can be a good thing. None of us wants to return to a past before we had things like refrigeration and modern medicine, although I suppose there are many who wish we could return to a past without social media. I can certainly sympathize with that. It seems that as a nation, as a people, as humans, we have become much more fractured than in the past, and many of our divisions are fuelled by what we read and hear online.

I do not know if Canadians today are more hateful than in the past, but it does seem that more anger and hatred are being expressed against specific groups in our society. This is a serious issue that merits serious consideration.

I think every member of this House will want to speak to this bill, and some to share personal stories of their experiences with hatred in our society. There is probably not a member of an ethnic, religious, racial or sexual minority who has not at some point had to deal with irrational prejudices that threaten to expand into hatred or violence.

The question we need to ask ourselves in this House is how we can best respond to hatred. Legislation such as Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, may provide a Criminal Code framework for punishment, but is punishing people for their ideas and beliefs going to change those beliefs?

At the same time, we have a responsibility to protect Canadians, especially vulnerable Canadians, from being harassed by those whose motivation is hate. It is our responsibility to find a balance between free speech and individual rights. We need to ask ourselves if this bill would do that.

For years, the question of what constitutes hatred has been a matter of personal interpretation. The line between what is acceptable and unacceptable has not been codified in law, which perhaps has

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made any enforcement of hate legislation difficult. Hate has always been a matter of interpretation.

At least we have a definition now:

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

I am not sure how helpful that will be when it comes to practical application.

Members have probably heard people say, "I am not an expert, but I know good art when I see it." That is not a definition of art; it is a subjective statement. That, it seems to me, is also the problem with defining hate and one of the problems with this bill. Who decides what is "detestation or vilification?"

Bill C-9 does set out who is protected by this legislation. Hatred would be prohibited when based on the following:

race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity

Human nature cannot be changed by legislation. Irrational hatred, because of its irrationality, would not be eliminated by passing legislation against hate crimes. Making something an offence would not change the feelings of those fuelled by hatred. However, what we can do as parliamentarians is show society's displeasure when hateful thoughts are put into action.

Murderous thoughts about the driver who cuts someone off on their morning commute would not land someone in jail. Murder will. It is actions that are the subject of Bill C-9, not a person's private thoughts.

There is a fine line to be drawn between the right to protest and interference with others. I expect we will hear a lot of debate about the idea of intimidation that is brought forth in this legislation. In theory, protecting those lawfully using a school, a place of worship or any other location is a good thing. Sometimes, however, those places could be considered legitimate targets for protest. If this bill passes, it will be challenging for police and the courts to balance the rights of all involved.

• (1715)

Hate remains an ongoing problem in Canadian society. It is not something government can eliminate, though we have certainly tried. We have had government reports on supporting victims of hate crimes. We have had statistics telling us who has been targeted by hate in Canada. We have Canada's action plan on combatting hate. We have Canada's anti-racism strategy. The RCMP has the national hate crimes task force. However, hate is still with us.

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In 2024, the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime released a special report entitled “Strengthening Access to Justice for Victims of Hate Crime in Canada”. It noted many of the problems we face in combatting hatred in our country. In 2023, there was a 32% increase in the number of hate crimes reported to police over the previous years. Those numbers are on the rise.

This is not a uniquely Canadian problem. Societies the world over are seeing increased polarization. Minority groups are being demonized for political gain. Violence is increasing. Social media is being used to fuel the fires of hatred. The ombudsman called for the federal government to step forward to provide a legal definition of a hate crime and to enact legislation.

This bill is in response to that. Definitions and laws are, in many ways, just words on paper. They do not convey the human element, the understanding of what hatred does to those who are targets of hate crimes. It is those people and their experiences that bring us to our discussion today.

The combatting hate act is not going to change anyone's mind. It is not going to miraculously convince all Canadians that they should love their neighbours. We, therefore, need to ensure that all Canadians are not being subjected to hate merely because of who they are or what they believe. No Canadians should be expected to live in fear for their lives or livelihood because of race or gender.

No Canadian should be prevented from accessing medical treatment or attending a religious service because the building is being blocked by those spewing hateful words and symbols. Yes, we need to preserve free speech, but the Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows those freedoms “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”

There is no constitutional right to promote hatred. Hate crimes are not victimless. They can cause deep psychological harm. Sometimes they can cause physical harm. They are intended to cause fear and intimidation. When we allow one group to be targeted, when we fail to act, we become complicit in the crime. I am sure none of us in the House wants that to happen.

Does the combatting hate act solve the problem of hatred in Canadian society? It does not. It cannot, because legislation does not change hearts and attitudes. That is something best done one on one, and a task that falls on each one of us as we are confronted with hatred.

In the House, we can show our desire for a better Canada, one where people are completely accepted for who they are, regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

Bill C-9 is intended to show society's displeasure with the actions of those who wilfully promote hatred in Canada. I am not convinced this legislation is going to be as effective as the government hopes.

• (1720)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the member's comments, and he mentioned in

the first part of his speech that many Canadians, especially people of colour, have been victims of hate crimes. I represent the riding of London West, where on June 6, 2021, a Muslim family, a family of colour originally from Pakistan, were just out for a walk and were murdered by someone simply because they were Muslim, simply because they were people of colour.

I followed the member's comments about the importance of protecting families and Canadians like the family in my riding, who were murdered because of their race and religion. Would the member not agree that the bill would do exactly that? Of the many requests that came through the summit on Islamophobia, that was one of them. Why will the member not support the bill?

Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, the bill is a matter of changing a definition, and nothing but. There is nothing concrete in the bill that would ensure Canadians the protection that the member is suggesting.

We are standing on where Canadians can be protected, regardless of their race, religion, colour, sexual orientation or anything else, but the bill would not do what the hon. member thinks it would do.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, there has been discussion on the existing provisions of the Criminal Code and whether they adequately address existing expressions of hate or alleged hate. I wonder whether the member has a position or an opinion on the existing provisions of section 319 in the code and how they might address the issues that we are talking about today.

Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, let us remind one another that the government weakened the Criminal Code a lot when it introduced Bill C-75 in 2016-17. The government did that so badly that we see crime rates and hate rates on the rise in Canada. We seem to be out of control on how to fight crime and make sure we protect Canadians. That is why the bill before us is empty except for a definition, and a definition does not solve problems.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find it somewhat unfortunate when Conservatives give misinformation, as if the proposed legislation would not have a very real and tangible impact. One of the reasons I want the bill go to committee is, for example, very specifically, the judicial manner in which the Attorney General would no longer be needed for consent to lay a charge in a certain situation. I see that as reinforcing the expediting of a charge. I think that is a positive thing.

I wonder whether the member could provide his thoughts regarding the actions in the bill that would, in fact, make a profound, positive impact against hate crime.

• (1725)

Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, the member and I disagree on this point quite a bit, because I think the government is trying to show that it is serious about the issue, but the Liberals have been dragging their feet for 10 years in dealing seriously with crimes taking place in Canada. That is the addressing that we need to look at. The government has always been virtue signalling and has been very symbolic on everything, but when it comes to action, its rate is zero.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to speak to Bill C-9, although I have grave concerns, not with the objective, but with the manner in which the Liberals have gone about trying to achieve it.

From the outset, let me say that I am grateful the Liberals have finally recognized there is a wave of hate sweeping this country. I am glad they have realized what the Jewish community in this country, among others, has been crying out for for years, which is a government that will listen to these concerns and understand the very real threats that are targeting them on a regular basis. However, just as the Liberals have done with Bill C-2 and the firearms file, they take a legitimate issue and offer a remedy that attacks the rights of citizens and expands the state's power, often without the checks and balances necessary.

Bill C-9 would do five things: “repeal the requirement that the Attorney General consent” to proceedings for hate charges, “create an offence of wilfully promoting hatred against any identifiable group by displaying certain symbols in a public place”, “create a hate crime offence of committing an offence...that is motivated by hatred”, “create an offence of intimidating a person in order to impede them from accessing certain places that are primarily used for religious worship” and “create an offence of intentionally obstructing or interfering with a person's lawful access to such places.”

Of these five things, three are already covered by existing laws, such as creating an offence of wilfully promoting hatred by displaying a symbol. Subsection 319(2) of the Criminal Code already targets the wilful promotion of hatred. It targets the incitement of hatred, and the courts have been very broad in their interpretation of how that communication must take place. Symbols are a part of that. I can give an example from my own riding, where someone was charged, just within the last two weeks, in Central Elgin, Ontario, with a hate charge under subsection 319(2) after mowing a swastika into their front lawn. The display of a hate symbol led to a hate charge under the existing law.

Creating a hate offence is also redundant because hate motivation is already an aggravating factor under section 718.2 of the Criminal Code, and it has consistently been applied by the courts.

Offences of intimidation and obstruction at places of worship are already criminalized under sections 423, 431 and 434.1 of the Criminal Code, as well as under the laws pertaining to threats in section 264.1.

What we are left with when we strip away these three things, which are already covered by existing laws, are two things. Bill C-9 really does two things. Number one, it would remove the requirement for the Attorney General to consent. This has been viewed by activists and advocates on the left and the right in this country as a

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necessary safeguard against overzealous and political prosecutions by law enforcement or by Crown attorneys who simply do not understand this because it is a rarely applied provision of the law.

The next part is the most egregious part, where I will spend the remainder of my time. The government is codifying a new definition of hate. Bill C-9 describes hatred as “the emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike”. The government has said this is adapted from the Keegstra Supreme Court decision, a seminal free expression case in Canada, but it actually changes something very key. In Keegstra, the court held that hatred “connotes emotion of an intense and extreme nature that is clearly associated with vilification and detestation.” This was expanded upon in the Whatcott decision, which says that hatred is “extreme manifestations of the emotion described by the words ‘detestation’ and ‘vilification’.” The word “extreme” does not appear in Bill C-9.

The government is very proud of this bill. The Liberals have had all summer to work on it, and they have had I do not know how many stakeholders, staffers, bureaucrats, lawmakers and lawyers go over every clause, I imagine, with a fine-tooth comb. Omitting an operative, very key word in a very key section of this bill is no accident. The government is, to use a legal term, wilfully lowering the threshold on what constitutes hate and, by extension, expanding the state's power and lowering the threshold of what can be regarded as free expression in this country.

• (1730)

The reason this is so important to me and to the Canadians who have been speaking out about Bill C-9 to this point is that the government has been, to its credit, very transparent on where it wants to go on free expression.

In the last two Parliaments, under the auspices of tackling so-called online harms, the Liberal government has introduced sweeping censorship bills that have been decried by voices on the left and the right. The Liberals have told us, as recently as last week, that this is coming back. The online harms bill is still very much a live issue, so we cannot look at Bill C-9 in isolation. We cannot disentangle it from the Liberal government's stated attitudes about freedom of expression and, quite frankly, the contempt in which they hold free expression and open debate.

I am going to quote someone for whom I believe the Liberals have a great affinity, and that is former Canadian chief justice Beverley McLachlin.

In her Keegstra dissent, she wrote:

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If the guarantee of free expression is to be meaningful, it must protect expression which challenges even the very basic conceptions about our society. A true commitment to freedom of expression demands nothing less.

We do not need to look far to see what happens when the threshold for hate is lowered. In the United Kingdom, police are not even rarely knocking on doors and arresting people over mean tweets, because the same desire that we are seeing behind some of the negative and concerning impulses in Bill C-9 is criminalizing hate based on the grounds that words are violence. Censors justify their limitations on freedom of expression by elevating speech to violence. It is not for the state to discern, let alone prosecute, hate that may exist in one's heart; the law is to punish action, and the existing laws already do this.

I would be remiss not to point out that the Liberals get tough on crime only when they are talking about thought criminals. These are the only people that the Liberals want to put behind bars.

Let us look at some of the real hate crimes across the country. According to Juno News, 130-some churches have been vandalized or victimized by arson since 2021. Synagogues in Canada have been firebombed and vandalized. Jewish schools have been shot at. If the Liberals were serious about real hate crimes, they would be seeking mandatory 10-year prison sentences for these heinous assaults on places of worship. Again, the law should punish bad behaviour and not bad feelings.

To be fair, we cannot confront the hatred that exists in Canada and in Canadian society without acknowledging some of the root causes of it. The crisis of hate is a direct consequence of 10 years of divisive Liberal identity politics and the reckless breaking of the immigration system by the Liberal government. We cannot talk about hate without talking about the breaking of the immigration system that has resulted in the importation of foreign conflicts, and, in some cases, very hateful ideologies into the country.

Much of this happened under the watch of the justice minister who tabled the bill. He was the immigration minister who looked at the first six years of Justin Trudeau's government and how immigration was bungled there and said, "Do not worry; I can do worse", and he did. It is no coincidence that hate crimes have risen as Canada has become less discerning and more reckless in its handling of the immigration system.

This is a crisis of the Liberals' creation. I do not trust those who caused the problem to solve it. I think that all people who may agree with the motivation behind this bill should be very cautious about handing over this level of power to the Liberals, when they have already demonstrated where they want to go. They have already demonstrated what they want to do.

I will return to another quote by former chief justice McLachlin.

She says:

[It] is not to say that it is always illegitimate for governments to curtail expression, but government attempts to do so must...be viewed with suspicion.

The Liberal government does not deserve the benefit of the doubt on hate. It does not deserve the benefit of the doubt on protecting charter liberties. It does not deserve the benefit of the doubt on any of the problems that it has been instrumental in either allowing to fester or, in some cases, in causing outright.

In Bill C-9, the good is already done by additional laws. The bad should be a warning sign. The Liberals should be very ashamed of trying to sneak this through the back door with a lower threshold for hate in a country that needs to protect and double down on free expression.

● (1735)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the real Conservative A-team this afternoon. We have heard repeated Conservative conspiracy theories over and over in the House. If we want to talk about real hate crimes, and I am not quoting alt-right so-called alternative news, there are Jewish members in my community who are covering up their Jewish identity in public. That is the hate we are talking about that this bill seeks to address. I am trying to understand what the member opposite's real objection is to this legislation.

When Conservatives talk about freedom of expression, it seems more and more likely that what they are talking about is freedom for Conservative members to say whatever they want without consequences. Is that the real objection?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I wish the member had spent less time working on what he thought was a zinger and more time listening to my speech, in which I detailed in excruciating and, I will argue, painful detail the real hate that is occurring against Christians and the Jewish community. I mentioned the firebombing of synagogues and shootings at Jewish schools. By the way, the member should be well aware that the Jewish community has looked at the Liberal government and has been absolutely ashamed to be represented by people who have cozied up to the very people who are responsible for Jew hatred in this country.

I do not take any cues from the member, who wants to accuse Conservatives standing up for freedom of being conspiracy theorists. He should be ashamed of that.

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague, who was telling us that there should be minimum sentences for vandalizing churches or synagogues.

I can understand the principle behind that, but let us take it a step further. I wonder if my colleague would agree that the religious exemption for displaying hate symbols should be repealed. Does he agree with me that the religious exemption should be repealed in this bill?

[English]

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his commitment to interrogating what is not in this bill. The reason I raised what I did about the lack of stiff penalties for people who assault places of worship in heinous ways is that this is not theoretical or hypothetical. We see it happening, sadly, on a regular basis in this country, and it is not covered by this proposed Liberal law. Liberals in the past have been endorsing or rationalizing some of these assaults on churches.

This is an important discussion, and I want to see real action on real hate, not lowering the threshold on how we define it.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, peculiarly, this bill the Liberals have put together addresses things that are already covered by the Criminal Code of Canada. There are already laws that provide protection against and speak to things like the swastika and others. Could the member elaborate a bit more on why he thinks those things, already covered by law in Canada, are being virtue-signalled by the Liberals in debate here in the House?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, that is indeed one of the glaring issues with this. The parts of the bill that there is no objection to by me or my colleagues are about things that are already illegal in Canada, making this redundant in a lot of ways. I pointed to a recent case where someone was charged for displaying a hate symbol under existing hate laws.

I have to draw attention to the fact that not half an hour ago, I pointed this out to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, a lawyer herself, and she had no idea. She had no answer. The Liberals have not prepared for the most basic challenging of this. What else have they not investigated on their own legislation?

• (1740)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, providing clarity and strong legislation is critically important. We are seeing that in this bill.

Would the member apply the very same principle that he is talking about now with respect to this bill to private members' bills, which are numerous from the Conservative Party, where the criminal law already covers it? Would he suggest that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I do not need much time to say what I have already said, because I do not think the member was listening, which is that we need to enforce the existing laws where they already cover what is happening in this country on hate, but, moreover, we cannot allow the Liberal government to sneak into law a lower threshold for defining “hate” that will be used to curb free expression in this country.

Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Oshawa.

I rise today to address Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, specifically the changes to subsection 319(6) and the introduction of proposed subsection 319(7) to the Criminal Code.

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I strongly support protecting religious freedom and ensuring that all Canadians are safe from hate and violence, but Bill C-9 would not do that effectively. I have three serious concerns about Bill C-9. First, it omits the protection of Christians, despite the fact that more than 100 churches have been burned and vandalized in Canada since 2021. Second, it would remove the safeguard of the Attorney General's consent under section 319. This would risk hate speech being weaponized as a political tool by any party in power by letting the government minister decide who gets charged. Third, it would water down the definition of “hatred” to something so vague and subjective that it would risk encroaching on the very right contained in subsection 2(b) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Beginning with my first objection to Bill C-9, I find it quite perplexing that Christian hate is not even mentioned in the bill. In recent years, we have seen alarming hate-motivated attacks, including the burning and vandalism of churches across Canada. Just last week, a century-old Ukrainian Orthodox church in Edmonton was burned to the ground. As we have witnessed a record number of sacred spaces being destroyed, Christians have noticed the government's silence. Congregations have been left in fear, and people of faith are feeling abandoned by their government's lack of enforcement of existing laws.

In this context, it is shocking that a bill about combatting hate is completely silent on the rise of Christian hate. The government's press release mentions anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia and transphobia, yet it makes no mention of the rise in hate crimes toward Christians. This bill would not add new protections for worshippers. Instead, it would expand state powers by removing the legal safeguards and watering down the definition of hate speech. It would pave the path toward politicizing restrictions on speech. It would even risk criminalizing dissent to what some would call thought crimes.

We must exercise caution. Once such powers are granted to the government, they can be weaponized by any government against its critics. The existing Criminal Code already covers the most serious offences. Section 318 makes it a crime to advocate for or promote genocide. Section 319 criminalizes public incitement to hatred, wilful promotion of hate and speech that would lead to a breach of peace. These provisions already strike a careful balance between protecting Canadians from true hate and safeguarding freedom of expression. Bill C-9 attempts to redefine hatred so vaguely that it would risk capturing legitimate debate.

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We have seen how this plays out elsewhere in the world. In the U.K., a man was arrested for holding a blank protest sign because authorities said it could be interpreted as offensive. In Australia, parents were investigated for hate speech after questioning gender policies at their school. In New Zealand, academics were threatened with jail for quoting banned manifestos. Canada is not immune.

We are crossing a dangerous line of removing the provincial Attorney General's consent and oversight and leaving charges in the hands of a minister appointed by the Prime Minister. The Liberal government has given us reason to believe that it would weaponize hate speech laws against its political opponents for political gain.

• (1745)

Bill C-9 would introduce a second significant change by adding a subjective, emotionally driven definition of hatred that lowers the threshold that was essentially set by the Supreme Court of Canada. As many members know, this is important because hatred is not defined in our Criminal Code. Rather, its meaning has developed over decades through case law, the most notable case being the 2013 Supreme Court case *Saskatchewan v. Whatcott*. That case said the term “hatred” must be interpreted as extreme manifestations of the emotion described by the words “detestation” and “vilification” and should not include representations that merely discredit, offend or insult.

That objective standard set by the Supreme Court protects freedom of expression while targeting real harm. The Liberal government seeks to overturn that Supreme Court definition with Bill C-9 by replacing that decision with a new subsection 319(7), which is found in Bill C-9. In this new subsection, the Liberals wish to redefine hatred as “the emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike”. Removing the word “extreme” lowers the threshold that the Supreme Court put in place to protect free speech.

By focusing on emotion rather than extreme manifestations, the government's new definition shifts attention to feelings rather than actual harm. Under the Liberal Bill C-9, citizens may self-censor, and prosecutors would also gain wide discretion to pursue cases based on perceived emotion, not demonstrable harm. This creates a real risk that individuals may be penalized for strong dissent, even without intent to incite hatred.

Why does this matter? It is important to recognize that these harmful parts of Bill C-9 could cause real issues for freedom of speech. Removing the Attorney General's consent and watering down the definition of “hatred” directly threaten our fundamental freedom of expression, which is contained in subsection 2(b) of the charter. Once charged with hate speech, a person's life can be ruined long before a verdict, with careers lost, reputations destroyed and families fractured. Bill C-9 amounts to cancel culture that is enforced by government power.

Laws that protect against hatred toward Christians, Jews, Muslims or any faith group must be enforced under existing laws contained in sections 318 and 319. Bill C-9 would not create new protections; it would create a fake law. It pretends to fight hate while really concentrating power in Ottawa. By removing the Attorney General's oversight and inserting a vague new definition of hatred,

this bill would give the government a tool to harass dissenters and weaponize the law for political gain.

Hate is real, and it must always be confronted, but we do not confront hate by weakening democracy. We do not confront hate by stripping away safeguards, criminalizing emotions and centralizing power in Ottawa. The true test of our democracy is not how we treat speech that we agree with, but how we protect the freedom of those with whom we profoundly disagree. Bill C-9 fails that test. It risks turning the coercive apparatus of the state into a weapon of dissent.

I stand here not just as a member of Parliament for the good people of Haldimand—Norfolk, nor as a lawyer, but as a Canadian and a Christian who believes that freedom of expression is sacred. We already have the laws to punish genuine hatred. We must now guard against a government that uses the language of protection as a cloak for control.

• (1750)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite's bringing up the issue of the use of legislation as a political tool. I have seen that first-hand in Hamilton, where activists in the community use accusations of hatred and racism as a tool to silence political opposition. Let us be clear: That is not what is happening here. That is not what is in the bill. The member opposite knows full well what the intentions and purposes of the bill are.

Why does the member not stand with members of her own community, members of minority communities and members of police forces across Canada, who are supportive of the bill, and support what is being asked for as a necessary protection for those groups across Canada?

Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I stand with members of all communities that are subject to hate. We know the current Criminal Code has, already contained within it, sections that deal with hate. The proposed law is not about that. The law is about the concentration of government power so that it can be weaponized against dissenters.

We have section 319(2), which protects against hate symbols; section 423 is about intimidation, and section 430 is related to mischief of religious groups. These things are already in the Criminal Code. The Liberals need to enforce the law.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Haldimand—Norfolk for her impassioned and informed speech. Like a lot of people in the House, I spend a lot of time visiting places of faith. The only one in all of Edmonton, including Christian, Hindu, Sikh or Muslim, that actually has to have a police car out front at all times is our local synagogue. That is a reflection of the rise in crime under the government.

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Does my colleague see anything in the bill that is going to stop the kind of hate that forces the Edmonton Police Service to offer police protection for only one specific faith?

Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, we listened to an impassioned speech by the member for Toronto Centre, who is a person of Jewish heritage and faith. It became very clear that the bill was not designed to protect that community. Right now, people of the Jewish faith cannot even shop in grocery stores in a kosher aisle without being assaulted, yet we have crimes on the book that are not being enforced. People are charged and then the charges are dismissed.

We need to uphold the rule of law. We need to uphold the laws in the Criminal Code that currently exist, rather than creating a fake law that makes people feel good but allows the government to weaponize dissent.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would basically like to come back to the issue of the religious exemption. It seems to me that the government has shown a willingness to potentially study it if the opposition parties bring it to committee.

I would like to know whether my Conservative colleagues share our point of view on the importance of debating this issue, which is happening on the streets of Quebec.

• (1755)

[English]

Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, it is important, when dealing with religious freedoms, that every issue should be on the table and that we should have the capacity to sit down and have meaningful discussions about things that we disagree on. That is the essence of freedom of expression, that we should be able to have discussions from all over the country. That is why the Attorney General's consent for charges of hate speech is so important. It allows geographical input from different provinces, which is channelled through the Attorney General. That is why it is very egregious that Bill C-9 would consider the removal of the Attorney General's consent.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in the House on behalf of the people of Oshawa. They have entrusted me to be their voice here in Ottawa.

Today I rise to speak to Bill C-9, the government's proposed combatting hate act. Let me begin where I think we all agree: I believe that every member of the chamber rejects hate and extremism. Every member should want Canadians to feel safe in their home, in their school, in their place of worship and in their community spaces. Police and prosecutors must have the right tools to protect Canadians from real threats, but the question before us is not whether we oppose hate; the question is whether Bill C-9 would be the serious, effective law Canadians need, or whether it would be a flawed, politically motivated gesture.

Canadians have lived with rising hate in recent years. Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, indigenous and Christian communities have all faced threats, vandalism, harassment and violence. It feels like the government is not really serious about combatting hate crime, as we see the bill arrive now, seemingly timed to coincide with politics. The sad reality is that it feels as if Bill C-9 is less about pro-

tecting Canadians and more about protecting Liberal political standing.

After the October 7 massacre in Israel, when Hamas brutally attacked innocent civilians, Jewish Canadians here at home immediately faced an unprecedented wave of anti-Semitism. Synagogues were vandalized. Students were harassed simply for attending school. Jewish communities lived in fear. The Liberals' response was that they waited, and then they introduced the bill that is before us so they could say to Jewish Canadians, "Look what we did for you."

At the very same time, they moved to grant recognition to Palestine, despite the fact that Hamas still holds innocent hostages to this day and was even responsible for the deaths of multiple Canadians. That sends a troubling mixed message; it shows that the government is more interested in political symbolism than in confronting hate with urgency and clarity.

My friend Paula Kelly, when she heard about the bill, sent me this; "my rant", she called it. She said, "it was done to tell minority communities, especially [mine,] the Jewish one, 'Look what we did for you. You see, we care.' Then an about turn, and they recognize Palestine [at the worst possible time]. They make me so angry. And how stupid do they think the Jewish community is? And may I add, laws are already in place; [we] just have to enforce said laws."

Let us not ignore another reality: anti-Christian hate has been rising in Canada, yet it receives little acknowledgement from the government. Since 2021, more than 100 Christian churches have been burned or vandalized, many of them through confirmed arson. These were not just buildings; they were places of worship, community centres and anchors for families, seniors and entire congregations that have been left traumatized.

When synagogues were attacked, when mosques were threatened, when gurdwaras were defaced, leaders rightly stood and denounced those crimes, but when Christian churches were burned, the silence from the federal Liberal government was deafening. If we are serious about combatting hate in all its forms, then we must call it out consistently, no matter who the target is. Hate is hate. Every faith community deserves equal recognition, equal protection and equal respect.

One of the most troubling aspects of Bill C-9 is how it carelessly mis-characterizes cultural and religious symbols. For millions of people around the world, a sacred symbol of peace and prosperity has been part of their faith and tradition for thousands of years, yet in the legislation, that same symbol is lumped together with hate imagery, as though it were born of extremism.

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I want to be clear that the concerns are not just abstract legal ones. I have heard directly from communities in Oshawa and across the Durham region that are deeply troubled by how the bill mischaracterizes their sacred symbols. For them, what the government is labelling as hateful is in fact a symbol of peace, faith, and prosperity, something that has been part of their cultural and religious tradition for thousands of years.

• (1800)

These residents told me that they now worry that their heritage could be stigmatized or even criminalized because of vague and sloppy drafting in Bill C-9. They feel unseen and unheard and unfairly associated with hate that has nothing to do with their faith.

It is my duty to bring their voices to this chamber. If we are serious about combatting hate, then we must do it with precision and cultural understanding. Sweeping up sacred traditions in the same net as extremist symbols is not only insulting; it undermines the very fairness Canadians expect from their lawmakers.

Another concern is that Canada already has hate laws. The Criminal Code already prohibits advocating genocide, promoting hatred and committing hate-motivated crimes. Bill C-9 would not create new protections; it would simply make certain hate-motivated conduct a separate offence.

What would that achieve? It would achieve more paperwork, more duplication and more symbolism, and perhaps even shorter sentences would be possible. Canadians do not need symbolic legislation. We need laws that are clear, enforceable and effective.

The bill would also remove the requirement for the Attorney General's consent before hate propaganda prosecutions. That safeguard has long ensured that prosecutions are pursued responsibly and consistently. It has prevented frivolous or ideological complaints from overwhelming the courts. Police and prosecutors themselves recognize its value. Removing it would risk abuse and misuse, specifically in private prosecutions.

Then, of course, there is the definition of hatred, as mentioned by many of my colleagues before me. Bill C-9 would codify the definition from the Supreme Court, but it would deliberately strip out important words. By lowering the threshold, the government would risk capturing speech that, while offensive, would remain protected in a free democracy. In a country like ours, people must be able to express views, even unpopular ones, without fear of criminal prosecution, as long as they do not cross into true hate or incitement. Again, these laws already exist.

When the scope of criminal law is expanded carelessly, we risk over-criminalization and uneven enforcement. We risk focusing on political optics instead of the real threats that Canadians face from violent extremists and repeat offenders.

Canadians deserve better than symbolic gestures and flawed drafting. They deserve laws that confront hate directly, consistently and effectively while also defending the freedoms that define us as Canadians. We must protect synagogues, mosques, churches, gurdwaras, schools and cultural centres from threats and intimidation. We must also protect free expression, peaceful protest and civil liberties.

Bill C-9, as written, would not get that balance right. Our duty in this House is not to rubber-stamp legislation; it is our duty to scrutinize it and to challenge it and to demand better, so that every Canadian can live free from hate and free from fear while also being free to speak, free to believe and free to assemble. That is the balance Canadians expect us to strike. That is the balance we must deliver.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is not looking for a rubber stamp from the Conservative opposition. We would like to ultimately see the legislation go to committee.

Just to highlight a couple of very key points, it is important to recognize that this is in fact a campaign promise to make it illegal to physically obstruct or intimidate to prevent access to a space used primarily by an identifiable group for religious, educational, social, cultural or sporting activities. This means mosques, synagogues, churches, schools, cultural community centres and more. It also means criminalizing the intentional incitement of hate by displaying hate symbols.

There are significant changes proposed within this legislation, and the government is putting it forward based on its commitment made to the electors. It is important that we allow the legislation to go to committee, see if the Conservatives have amendments that they can propose and listen to what—

• (1805)

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

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, of course we agree. We want these hateful acts to be criminalized, and they already are. We think that they should be prosecuted. I would argue they are not yet prosecuted to where they should be, but the laws are already in place, as mentioned by my colleagues previously, in sections 319 and 318 and other sections of the Criminal Code. They are already there. We just need to enforce them.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question from our delightful colleague from Winnipeg seemed to indicate that the Liberal government, which put forward the bill, believes that there are no redundancies built into the bill and that the things they are criminalizing are not already covered by existing law. I want to ask my hon. colleague about this, because we know that intimidation is already a crime and threats are already a crime. We have several sections of the Criminal Code that would already apply to the very scenario the Liberals are claiming needs a new section. I am wondering what the member makes of that and of the fact that the Liberals do not even seem to understand the laws they are trying to amend.

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Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, I respect that question, because it is very true. Canada already criminalizes the wilful promotion of hatred under section 319, but the bill would create new offences under proposed subsection 319(2.2), so this would be a duplication. It feels like it is more about politics than public safety, but it would go a little further, and the things we are concerned about include removing the Attorney General and changing the definition of “hate”. That is a very serious thing to do. We have to look at that very closely, and we look forward to doing so.

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have tried many times to get a response from my Conservative colleagues but without success. Maybe I will have a better chance this time.

Bill C-9 continues to include a religious exemption for hate symbols. Does my colleague not find this illogical? Would the Conservative Party be willing to review this situation, perhaps in committee, in which two types of rights are granted? This bill allows the use of hate symbols for religious purposes, but not for political purposes. It makes no sense.

I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on this issue.

[*English*]

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, I think that the clarity has to come on whether a symbol has been culturally appropriated, and I think the member is referring specifically to the Nazi *hakenkreuz*. It has been culturally appropriated from the Hindu religion. It is thousands of years old, and I think that my Jewish friends understand that. However, there is a section in the bill that refers to any symbol that looks like that symbol, which I think is too vague, and it has to be clear.

Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, earlier today we heard the member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas issue personal attacks on the Leader of the Opposition using unparliamentary language when he stated that the Conservative leader was personally associated with a white nationalist group.

I would ask that you, Mr. Speaker, rule such wording unparliamentary and ask the member to apologize and withdraw those comments.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I thank the hon. member for Edmonton West for the intervention. I was not in the chair at the time, but the table has reviewed the tape in question.

I would note that, when we are in this place, we should be judicious in our language. While there are often comments flying back and forth, when they personally impugn the motives or character of an hon. member in this place, that goes beyond what is appropriate and does not contribute to the debate.

I would invite the hon. member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas to simply withdraw those comments. We could then move forward.

• (1810)

John-Paul Danko: Mr. Speaker, I would say that there are all kinds of comments from the opposition impugning the reputation of members. If they would like to state some of those outside and—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order. We are getting into debate. I have encouraged the member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas to withdraw the comments. I would note at this point that perhaps the member will find it difficult to catch the Speaker's eye for the remainder of the sitting day, and we will carry on with resuming debate.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, it is about 20 minutes before we will potentially adjourn. However, I think that the decision you, Mr. Speaker, are making is without any sort of indication of the issue being brought forward or the time in which it occurred. At the very least, you should maybe take it as notice for other members who may want to provide comment on it as opposed to making a verdict before others are provided the opportunity to provide their opinion. I would like to take a look at Hansard, for example, and I think that would be fair.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary should know that the Speaker is fully empowered to make decisions in the moment when things are said that are unparliamentary. He does not have to reserve judgment for days and days when people use unparliamentary language. It has also long been a well-established principle in this place that making accusations of involvement with heinous and reprehensible organizations is ruled out of order.

The hon. member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas should do the right thing and simply withdraw as the Speaker has instructed him to do. If he does not, and if there is not more of a sanction than not being recognized for 20 minutes on a short Wednesday, then this will send a terrible signal to this place. Members would feel free to make all kinds of accusations about the groups members opposite might be associated with. That is a road I do not think any of us wants to go down. I think the hon. member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas should do the mature thing: apologize and withdraw.

John-Paul Danko: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of collaboration, I withdraw my comments, but I ask the members opposite to reflect—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order.

We will take the win right there. The comments have been withdrawn. We can consider this matter closed, but I will invite members of this place to remember that we can have strong debate. In fact, strong debate is encouraged in this place, but there is a line at personal comments on the motivations of an individual member or personal attacks. That is where things go beyond.

We consider the matter closed. We are on to resuming debate, and the hon. member for Saskatoon West has the floor.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to split my time with the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

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This legislation, in my view, is flawed and redundant. We already have laws to cover what this legislation would be doing. I am going to talk about the real issue that I see, which is enforcing criminal laws in our country. It is one of the problems we have in our country right now, not the lack of laws. I also want to talk a bit about what we should be talking about, which is our Conservative plan to combat crime. There are real crimes happening in our country and real problems that everyday citizens are facing, and we need to take action. That is what we need to talk about.

I am not a lawyer, but frankly, anything to do with stopping hate sounds like a good thing. When I first looked at this bill, it seemed like something I would maybe be interested in supporting. However, as I started talking to people, I heard a lot of people say they were for it and a lot say they were against it. A lot of issues started coming up, and I realized that maybe a bit more needed to be looked at in this bill.

Instead of reading about the bill, I grabbed the bill and looked at it to see what it actually said, and I found some interesting things. The first thing I noticed as I read the bill is that it would create a new intimidation offence. It would prohibit conduct intended to provoke fear in order to impede access to religious, cultural, education or community places. In other words, if there was a demonstration outside a church, mosque or synagogue and a person trying to go there felt intimidated and did not feel safe, that is what this bill is referring to. Okay, that is fine, but we already have subsection 423(1) of the Criminal Code, which is about using intimidation to stop people from doing something lawful. It is not so much that we are lacking the law to protect our religious, cultural, educational and community places, but it is that we do not tend to enforce the law that is already there.

I kept reading the bill and found a second offence that it would create, a new obstruction offence, which would prohibit intentionally obstructing or interfering with lawful access to religious, cultural, education or community places. That is a whole other level of intimidation when someone cannot physically get there. Once again, we already have laws for this. There are subsections 176(2) and 176(3) in the Criminal Code, for obstructing or disturbing religious services or meetings. It is already an offence. There is also section 264, which deals with criminal harassment, threats and stalking. These are long-standing offences that have been used in many different cases, but there is often a lack of enforcement of these laws in the specific circumstances related to churches and other religious institutions.

I found a third criminal offence that the bill would create, which is a new hate crime offence. It proposes to establish that any federal offence motivated by hatred would be a distinct offence with elevated penalties. We already have laws against hate. In fact, section 718.2 of the Criminal Code makes hate an aggravating factor when someone is convicted. In other words, if a person is convicted of assault, mischief or some more serious crime and it was motivated by hate, a judge can add hate as an aggravating factor, which would make the sentence that much longer. It would make the offence that much more serious to the person. We already have this, and again, it is just not enforced as much as it should be.

A fourth offence would be created by this bill, a new hate propaganda offence, which would prohibit the public display of certain

hate or terrorist symbols with intent to promote hatred against an identifiable group. An unfortunate example of this happened just a week ago in St. Thomas, where a family that moved into a neighbourhood was promoting a lot of anti-Semitic material and songs and a swastika was mowed into the lawn. Guess what. Two people were arrested and charged with criminal harassment, public incitement of hatred and mischief. This just happened. We obviously have not passed this bill yet, yet the police had the laws and tools they needed to charge these two people. Fortunately, in this case, charges were laid.

There are of course even more laws. There is a hate propaganda law in section 318, even for things like advocating genocide. There is section 319, for public incitement likely to cause a breach of the peace. Subsection 319(2) deals with the wilful promotion of hatred, and subsection 319(2.1) is about the wilful promotion of anti-Semitism. Of course, there is section 430, which deals with mischief to property motivated by hate. That is already an indictable offence with a maximum penalty of 10 years. We have all of these laws on the books that deal with the subject matter that this particular legislation is talking about.

● (1815)

I kept reading because there was more. There were a couple more things that I found. The first was that the law removes the requirement for the Attorney General to agree to lay hate charges. There are pros and cons to this. Some would say that this is a roadblock and that it makes it difficult to lay hate charges. Others would say that it also prevents vexatious charges from happening. It provides that sober second thought to make sure that this does indeed reach the bar of a hate crime. Removing the requirement for the Attorney General is maybe not the best idea.

The other thing that I found, the last thing, was that it removes the word “extreme” from the definition of hatred. Instead of extreme bias or hatred toward a particular group, it says bias or hatred toward that group.

Again, it lowers the bar a little, making it a little easier for vexatious charges to be laid, which is concerning to me. We have to be careful that we do not give too much power to the state when it comes to maintaining our freedoms. It is a balance that we have to be really careful with. If we take all of that together, the legislation does not actually do a whole lot. In terms of the first points that I made, we already have the laws to cover what we need to do here. It is just those last two things, which are relatively small, I would say, that it changes.

This is really window dressing. It avoids the real problem, which I have mentioned a few times, and that is proper enforcement. To be clear, I am not criticizing the police. In fact, if we were to talk to any police officers about any kind of crime in our country, they would say that they are very frustrated. They want to enforce the laws, but they have a lot of problems and a lot of things holding them back. For example, they know that criminals will just end up getting bail instead of going to jail, which makes it very difficult for them to arrest people. There is a lack of will at the civic, provincial and even federal levels among prosecutors to actually prosecute these crimes. Therefore, police are not empowered to lay these charges, because the prosecutors will simply not prosecute them.

Conservatives believe in protecting vulnerable communities; we also believe in free expression, religious freedom and peaceful protest. These are the things that we need to balance. My concern with the legislation is that it would tip the scales a little bit too much toward giving a lot of power to the federal government. I am concerned about free expression.

We need to target hate crimes with real enforcement instead of targeting law-abiding Canadians. I want to point out that the symbol part of the legislation can be very tricky as well. Symbols are used in many different situations. Of course, there is the example with the Hindu community, which has used what we would call the swastika for eons as one of its sacred symbols. It has very positive meanings for them, but the Nazis took that symbol over and called it the *hakenkreuz*, and that became their symbol of Nazism. Therefore, we have to be very careful not to outlaw a symbol that is very meaningful to certain groups. We have to be very careful.

Briefly, I want to speak about what the government should be focusing on, in my opinion. This corresponds to what we believe as Conservatives, which is that we should be focusing on the real crime issues that we have in our country. We should be helping our Canadian residents to feel safe in their own neighbourhoods, but they do not feel safe right now. We should be helping police forces, prosecutors and courts to do their jobs. We should be helping them to get things done.

We have a lack of timely follow-through. Charges get dropped. There are weak sentences. This comes back to some of the legislative changes that the Liberal government has made. Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 were reforms that it undertook to eliminate a lot of mandatory minimum sentences, to reduce the sentencing times, to actually create house arrest, to allow criminals to get out on bail rather than going to jail. These are the things that are causing the problems in our cities and our country today. These are the issues that my constituents, and I think all of our constituents, talk about.

These are the issues that we should be debating and changing in the House.

Where is the Liberal bill to undo the bail reforms that Liberals made, to get criminals back in jail rather than out on bail? We are still waiting. We have been promised this for months, and it has not happened. Everybody is asking for this. Mayors are asking for this. Provincial premiers are asking for this.

We really need to move forward. I want to reiterate that I believe Bill C-9 is flawed. We need to focus on what we need to do to fix

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the problems that we have with our laws in our country so that Canadians can feel safe in their neighbourhoods, so that Canadians can have peace and so that they can live in harmony and practise freedom.

• (1820)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I want to be very clear about Bill C-9. We would actually be creating a stand-alone hate offence that could be applied across federal law, from the Criminal Code to the National Parks Act, so that any hate-motivated law-breaking would be treated with the gravity it deserves.

I think that to try to give the false impression that the legislation is all covered from within does a disservice to the many individuals and/or groups that have been advocating for us to heighten the importance of ensuring that our laws are there to deal with hate crimes.

Does the member not believe that in fact we can do more to ensure that hate crimes are there, from a legislative—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Saskatoon West has the floor.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, of course we all want fewer hate crimes in our country. Of course we all abhor hate crimes when we see them. However, there are already many laws on the books to deal with pretty much any kind of hate crime that can be there. There has been the burning of churches, as an example. A lot of these crimes go unsolved, or the laws are not enforced.

There are current laws on the books that fully allow us to deal with the situation; therefore I would suggest that we need to, yes, work on having fewer hate crimes in our country, but we need to give our police officers the resources they need to enforce the laws we already have.

• (1825)

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague has had the opportunity, as I have, to take in some of the debate so far. We have heard the Liberals accuse Conservatives of being conspiracy theorists for raising very legitimate questions about freedom of expression, which by the way have been raised by civil society groups on the left and the right in the last few days.

I want to ask my hon. colleague this: Has he heard from the Liberals, in their questions on the issue and in their own interventions, any explanation of how the legislation would differ from the powers that are already on the books when it comes to hate exhibited through hate symbols or through intimidation or obstruction, and in general from the stand-alone hate charge, which the Criminal Code already looks at as an aggravating factor?

Government Orders

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked an excellent question. The short answer is no, I have not heard much logic from the other side, frankly, on just about anything in the House.

There are laws on the books. A great example is the situation in St. Thomas I cited, which happened just a few weeks ago, where there was a symbol involved, and police officers reacted to that. They were able to charge the homeowner with crimes. They were able to charge him with aggravated hate crime.

We have enforcement of the laws. That exists today. That is exactly what we should be achieving in our country: using the laws we have to make sure we can reduce the number of hate crimes in our country.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Saskatoon West seems very committed to individual rights, but he also seems aware of the need to tackle genuine hate speech. Does he find it acceptable that the Criminal Code includes a religious exemption allowing hate speech as long as it is based on a sacred text?

[English]

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, we have to be really careful that we focus on what needs to be focused on. We have to make sure that we stop and reduce the amount of hate crime in our country. We have to remember that we have existing laws on the books that can be used for this purpose. We have to make sure that our law enforcement has the tools it needs in order to enforce those laws.

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, as a preamble that really should go without saying, there is no disagreement in any corner of the House about the values that should underlie this legislation. We all value a safe Canada where every single human is free to live their lives as their fullest selves irrespective of their race, religion, ethnicity, language, physical or mental disability, etc. There is no member in this House who wants to see hate or the symbols of hate that the present legislation deals with displayed or promoted in any way in our country or in any other country. I think we remain unanimous in the House in condemning hate, hate crimes and hate propaganda.

However, a careful distinction must be brought to bear between condemnation and criminalization, and we must always note this. When we approach discussions of criminalization, it should be with humility. If I could wave a magic wand and stop anyone in this country from ever propagating any hate or committing a hate crime, I swear I would do it, but such magic is not one of the powers vested in us as elected representatives. We can only modify the criminal justice system, and we must be alive to the unintended consequences that such modifications could have.

In that spirit, I would honestly like to raise with the members opposite the following concerns I have with this legislation. Number one, would it drive hate organizations underground? It is said that sunlight is the best disinfectant. When the justice minister introduced this legislation, my thoughts immediately turned to the famous and thankfully aborted Nazi rally in Skokie, Illinois, of 1977. It is a very famous case, in part because the ACLU lawyer who fought for the right of those marchers to march was David Gold-

berger, who was a very proud Jew. Reprehensibly, the marchers chose Skokie, Illinois, because there was a high proportion of Holocaust survivors there whom they sought to terrify. On the date of the march, 20 broken and twisted individuals wearing Nazi *hakenkreuzes* were met by 2,000 counterprotesters shouting them down. No violence occurred, and the cowardly traitorous Nazis went home without marching.

A recent ABC News article quotes the current mayor of Skokie, Illinois, saying that looking back 40 years later, many positive things came out of that day. Previously, the Holocaust survivors in Skokie, he says, “were a very quiet group” who did not talk about their experiences, but he said these events “ignited a passion in them”, and they founded the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center within two years of that day. The ABC News article notes that both Bill Clinton and Barack Obama have recognized the incredible work that museum does.

In many ways, John Stuart Mill can be thought of as the founder of the Liberal tradition that gives the Liberal Party its name. This is what he had to say about false and hateful opinions: “though the silenced opinion be an error...it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.” That is to say that no one wants to hear from hateful miscreants. No one in this House does, but when we do, we must take it as a solemn opportunity to perhaps not change their minds, but loudly and with facts and arguments disabuse whatever listeners they may have of the poison they utter.

With the words of John Stuart Mill and the examples of the Skokie counterprotesters in mind, I ask the justice minister this admittedly counterintuitive question: By driving hate into the fetid swamps of Discord or whatever website has replaced 4chan, does it deprive our communities the opportunity to denounce it in person and to show people in the real world that their views are not welcome and that their movement has no purchase among the 99.9% of Canadians who value each other's fundamental rights and freedoms? As a sub-concern, if it is allowed to fester in these dark corners of the Internet, when it does finally burst out, is it more likely to do so in a form worse than a flag or symbol? I do not ask this question lightly, and it brings me to my second concern with the proposed legislation.

In some comments I made following a speech about criminal justice, I expressed concern that the deputy government House leader seemed more concerned with abstractions rather than concrete occurrences. On this side of the House, we pride ourselves on our concern for concrete occurrences. As a Canadian, I am terribly upset, disgusted and disappointed that Jewish individuals have been harmed by criminal psychopaths because of who they are. A man was beaten up in front of his children in Montreal this summer. A few weeks ago, a woman was stabbed in the kosher food section of a local Ottawa grocery store. Less well known is that in the spring of 2024, a 15-year-old Israeli immigrant to Canada was attacked at school for her place of origin. In that case, I believe it took two weeks before the police even deigned to lay charges.

In my own circle of physician friends, I am sorry and ashamed to report that some Jews have left Canada permanently because of the lack of safety these concrete events demonstrate. I want dearly for my Jewish friends to feel safe to return to Canada.

• (1830)

Year after year, we have increases in violent crime in Canada. We have seen ongoing increases in every classification and every sort of violent crime. These increases, I am sorry to say, started in 2015. In every class of violent crime, we have seen a failure of the Liberal government to keep the bad guys in jail.

It is my understanding that the wilful promotion of hatred, whether with a symbol or a flag or a speech or a newspaper article, is already illegal in Canada under subsection 319(2) of the Criminal Code. It is furthermore my understanding that intimidating a person who seeks to enter a place of worship or any other place is already illegal under section 423 of the Criminal Code. However, we have seen very many infractions of these already-existing laws in the targeting of religious minorities. I may go so far as to say that every religious minority is dealing with more infractions of these laws in just about every Canadian city. In fact, every Canadian is dealing with more of every sort of crime. This is why I fear that the present bill is an abstraction and a distraction.

We need concrete measures. We need the violent and hateful people who do these sorts of things, who break our laws, to go to jail and stay in jail. Conservatives have proposed such measures to put the bad guys in jail. I earnestly beg the members opposite to take us up on it. Let us do these concrete things.

Those are my twin concerns. By removing the consent of the Attorney General and watering down the definition of hate, would the Liberals cast a wider net, driving cranks and loons underground, where they might become more hateful and, God forbid, more violent? Why would they cast a wider net when they are already refusing to use the smaller, more targeted net that they have? Why do they refuse to repeal their irresponsible bail laws that let violent psychos back on our streets again and again? I ask the questions in good faith.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we talk about hate speech and the issues that are related to it and the violence, we have to take into consideration, as a federal government, that we want to bring forward changes to the criminal law that would actually have a tangible impact and would give additional tools to law enforcement officers and provincially appointed Crown attorneys who take these individuals to the court system. It would give them that extra tool so we could see more success in the prosecution and have heavier penalties for the individuals committing these hideous hate crimes against people.

Would the member not agree that they are shared responsibilities and that part of our responsibility is to pass legislation—

• (1835)

Matt Strauss: Mr. Speaker, yes, that is exactly what I am driving at. We want concrete measures to enforce the laws that already exist.

Government Orders

When I was listening to the member's question, I had to wonder if it is his belief that it is provincial attorneys general who are stopping violent criminals from going to jail right now. I do not think it is, and I do not think the member would dare mention a provincial attorney general who he thinks is derelict in duty in that way.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his excellent speech, my colleague talked about the problems of enforcement. The government is trying to suggest that there is a problem in terms of a lack of things being classed as offences, but actually there is a problem of enforcement not being effective.

There is also a problem of the tone that has been set by the current government when it comes to attacks, particularly against churches. Gerry Butts, the former adviser to the previous prime minister, who was intimately involved with the current Prime Minister's work as well, basically said that these attacks on churches were "understandable". That is a grotesque statement from a senior Liberal.

I wonder if my hon. friend would agree that while we need to address the enforcement issue, we also need to address the fact that senior people in the current government have said things that have kind of tacitly lent credence to the motivations that may be behind some of these attacks.

Matt Strauss: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member. I thank him for the point.

Hate cannot be tolerated, no matter what justification is given by the former prime minister's former principal secretary. I hope that we all keep that in mind as we approach commentary around the present legislation.

I myself was distressed when the Conservative justice shadow critic brought up this problem of church burnings and was met with laughter from the other side. I did think that this was inappropriate, so I thank the member for raising the point.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a relatively simple question and I would like a relatively simple answer. There is currently an exemption in the Criminal Code known as the religious exemption.

Does my colleague agree with that exemption?

[*English*]

Matt Strauss: Mr. Speaker, I fear it is not a simple question. It goes to the heart of what I was talking about in the John Stuart Mill quote and philosophical liberalism. What one person means when they say something from a different culture or a different religion can be taken differently. That is why we have to have a bias toward philosophical liberalism that I fear the government is abandoning with the present legislation.

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The question is on the motion.

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that it pass on division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6:42 p.m.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1840)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to have my son joining me here in Ottawa today.

This country is experiencing a serious unemployment crisis. The overall unemployment rate of 7.1% is bad enough, but it is young Canadians who are suffering the most, with a disastrous rate of 15.5%.

It is not just the number of unemployed people that is a problem, but also how long they remain unemployed. On average, people stay unemployed for more than 21 weeks. This means that more Canadians, especially young people, are out of work and staying out of work longer. They wait, they struggle, and many lose hope.

I have spoken with Canadians who are experiencing this. A young programmer living in Vancouver told me that he had sent out over 1,000 job applications. He is educated, skilled and ready to contribute. However, after more than a year, he is still unemployed. This is the reality for far too many people. That young man is not alone. I hear the same story in Toronto, Quebec City, Montreal, small towns and rural areas. Young Canadians everywhere say they want to work, but they cannot find a job.

Why is this happening? It is because the government has made choices that hurt Canadian workers. It has allowed certain immigration programs, such as the temporary foreign worker program, to be abused while genuine asylum seekers wait years for a decision. We even see fake college acceptance letters being used to circumvent the system. Meanwhile, Canadians who are here and ready to work cannot find jobs. Is this fair? No. Is it responsible? Certainly not.

The government is also blocking projects that would create jobs. Bill C-69 and other measures have blocked investments in natural resources, pipelines and mines. These projects would have provided work for thousands of families, but instead of freeing up Canadian talent, this government is tying it up with red tape and gatekeepers. While other countries are moving forward, Canada is moving backward.

The result is clear. TD Bank predicts that 100,000 jobs could be lost by the third quarter this year. The Governor of the Bank of Canada says that businesses are going to scale back hiring. The numbers are there, but behind every number is a family, a young graduate and a community losing hope. This government's record is clear: More Canadians are staying out of work for longer and with fewer opportunities for the future. We have talent, energy and resources, but instead of unleashing that potential, the government is putting up roadblocks.

My question is simple, and I will ask it directly: When will the government finally remove the roadblocks, listen to Canadians and let our workers, especially our young people, build their future here at home in Canada?

[English]

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his dedication to the Canadian workforce. The Government of Canada shares this dedication.

The world of work is rapidly changing, so we are committed to protecting and supporting workers in this time of labour market uncertainty. We are transitioning to a one economy agenda. We are making significant investments to ensure Canadians have the skills they need to fill in-demand jobs. We are advancing new opportunities, especially for our youth.

It is estimated that one in six Canadians have careers in the skilled trades, and registrations for new apprenticeships are higher than they have been in over a decade. However, there is a massive retirement wave sweeping across the country, so we need to encourage more young Canadians to pursue this line of work because this retirement wave is leaving a critical shortage of skilled trade workers in its wake. In fact, we are predicting that 600,000 skilled trade workers will retire by 2031.

• (1845)

[Translation]

Creating and promoting these employment opportunities is a key priority for the Canadian government. Skilled trades offer respected, well-paid, highly sought-after and rewarding jobs.

Budget 2024 laid out a forward-looking plan to build nearly 3.9 million new homes by 2031. To achieve that, we need more Red Seal certified tradespeople, including carpenters, plumbers and electricians. That is why the Government of Canada is investing nearly \$1 billion annually in apprenticeship support.

It is fair to say that many young Canadians have seen their wages decline, and it is difficult for them to take advantage of new training opportunities when they are struggling to make ends meet. That is why we are taking steps to make apprenticeships more affordable, for instance by offering loans, tax credits and employment insurance benefits. Apprentices can access EI benefits while attending technical training and obtain an interest-free Canada apprentice loan of up to \$20,000.

Furthermore, through the Canadian sustainable jobs act, we are ensuring that Canadians have access to sustainable, well-paid jobs that contribute to their prosperity.

[English]

I would also mention that our future skills centre has helped more than 105,000 Canadians access the skills training or employment they need for a successful future. We are prioritizing workforce initiatives and opportunities such as these, which will develop a larger, highly certified, diverse and inclusive trades workforce.

We are making sure that those who face additional barriers have access to the supports needed to access education and training and get a job. This includes indigenous youth, new immigrants, young people living in poverty or facing homelessness, youth who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, young persons with disabilities, Black and racialized youth, and young women.

Labour market participation among working-age mothers with young children was up to 79.1% in 2024 from 75.8% in 2019. This is a promising statistic, but there is a lot more work that needs to be done across all sectors, and we will be there with the provinces and territories to make sure that we have the fastest-growing economy in the G7. We will continue to create job opportunities for Canadians for all—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

[Translation]

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is putting a lot of emphasis on apprenticeships, which is obviously an important discussion. However, in the meantime, the government continues to block important projects. The Prime Minister supports the legislation stemming from Bill C-69, which is blocking major projects. What is more, the government has decided not to take steps to build more homes. Providing training is necessary, but it is also necessary to ensure that there are jobs. The government has broken the immigration system and halted economic development in important sectors. Things have to change.

[English]

Annie Koutrakis: Mr. Speaker, in the words of our Prime Minister, “It’s time to build big, build bold, and build now.”

If young Canadians want to work, there will be jobs, but they will need to develop new skills first, perhaps. This is why we need

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to attract, hire and train thousands of new skilled tradespeople right away. This is why we are making targeted investments under the Canadian apprenticeship strategy to create a larger and more inclusive trades workforce.

[Translation]

This year, the Government of Canada is supporting roughly 159,000 opportunities for young people and students through the youth employment and skills strategy, which includes Canada summer jobs, and through the student work placement program, the supports for student learning program and the Canada Service Corps.

These programs give young people access to post-secondary education, skills-based training and the integrated support they need to succeed.

● (1850)

[English]

FIREARMS

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I should probably say, on behalf of Canadian firearms owners and on behalf of the Conservatives, how grateful I am to the Minister of Public Safety for telling the truth about the Liberal government's sham of a buyback. Unfortunately he has not been so candid in the House of Commons when he knows the cameras and the microphones are rolling, but when he was speaking with a constituent, a tenant, an ordinary Canadian raising very legitimate concerns, he said that it is a waste of time. It is a waste of money. It is not going to go after the causes of gun crime in this country, which has run rampant after 10 years of Liberal government and mismanagement of the justice file. Of course, when he is called on this in the House of Commons, he retreats back to the Liberal talking points that I am sure his parliamentary secretary will give us this evening.

. I want to ask a very fundamental question about the buyback, because we know that the order in council prohibited what was at first over 1,500 models of firearms, many of them used quite regularly and quite routinely for hunting, some of them obsolete and non-existent in the Canadian market. The order in council, which launched the prohibition that has justified the so-called buyback, came after a tragedy in Canada, a killing spree in Portapique, Nova Scotia, to which every sensible, reasonable person in this country would respond with disgust and horror.

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The problem is that it was not a spree that involved legally owned firearms. It was not a spree that would have been prevented by the very measures the Liberal government introduced in the days that followed. The reason I bring this up is that the last time I spoke to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety about firearms, he invoked that tragedy to justify the Liberal government's gun confiscation scheme, a scheme that by its very design targets only law-abiding gun owners, because the criminals in this country are not the ones who will be lining up to turn over their illegal firearms to the government, regardless of whether there is any compensation.

What we have here is something the government says will cost three-quarters of a billion dollars. By the way, with Liberal math, I believe we need to triple it and add 50% or something to get somewhere close to the real number. Even if we take at face value that it will cost three-quarters of a billion dollars, that is money that could be going towards beefing up law enforcement. It is money that could be going towards beefing up the border to cause us to be better able to intercept illegal firearms coming from the U.S., the firearms that genuinely end up in violent street crime in Toronto, Surrey and other communities across the country.

There were police experts before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights last week, who were very candid, as candid as the Minister of Public Safety is when he does not know he is being recorded. They said there will be not minimal but zero effect on gun crime when the gun confiscation scheme goes forward.

I asked the Prime Minister why he has not fired the public safety minister, who does not even know what a firearms licence is, does not even know what the Canadian firearms safety course is and does not know the classifications of firearms but thinks he somehow has the credibility to tell Canadian gun owners who are vetted and trained that they should turn over their property to the government.

Therefore I ask the government, when will it drop the pretense, drop the facade, get rid of this sham of a buyback and go after real criminals, not law-abiding hunters and sport shooters?

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's question, I am pleased to rise to discuss our government's commitments to strengthen gun control and to address gun violence in Canada. The safety of Canadians is the number one priority for this government and we are taking decisive action to stop the increase in gun violence at our borders and in our communities across Canada.

[English]

The Ruger Mini-14 used by Marc Lépine at École Polytechnique, the Beretta CX4 Storm used at Dawson College by Kimveer Gill and the CZ858 used by Richard Henry Bain at the Metropolis nightclub are assault-style weapons that have marked Canadian history.

[Translation]

The government feels that the significant risk posed by these assault-style firearms in no way justifies keeping them in Canadian

communities. Since 2020, it has banned approximately 2,500 makes and models of firearms. These are firearms that are not suitable for hunting or sport and that exceed safe civilian use.

Getting these guns off our streets is in line with the recommendations of the mass casualty commission, which advocates banning assault weapons and rapidly reducing the number of weapons in circulation. These weapons can no longer be used. It only makes sense that our government would want to fairly compensate people who owned these weapons. I would also like to point out that 19,000 other models of firearms will remain available.

As of April 30, under the assault-style firearms compensation program, more than 12,000 prohibited firearms had been collected from businesses and then destroyed. Now, our government has announced that it is moving forward with the program for individual owners. We are starting with a pilot project in Cape Breton. The program will then open to all eligible owners across the country with a declaration period in the fall of 2025, followed by a collection and compensation period in early 2026.

However, no single program can stop gun violence on its own. That is why the compensation program is being rolled out alongside several other measures. The government's comprehensive plan to combat gun crime includes funding to build safe communities and to help stop gun and gang violence. It also includes strengthening our borders, where we have committed to adding resources to combat firearms trafficking and smuggling to prevent them from entering Canada.

Since 2016, our government has invested more than \$1.4 billion in targeted initiatives. This includes more than \$560 million to equip the RCMP and the CBSA with state-of-the-art tools to detect smuggled firearms, including the type of firearms used in the Portapique shooting.

Last summer, our government announced that detectors, drones and helicopters would be deployed at the border, along with additional staff and canine units. This will greatly increase law enforcement's ability to detect and seize firearms and prohibited weapons. Together, our efforts are preventing firearms from being diverted to the black market, where they would be misused to commit crimes.

Through these initiatives, our government is taking meaningful steps to make Canada less vulnerable to gun violence while being fair to responsible, law-abiding owners and businesses.

• (1855)

[English]

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, we can go through the list, although not in the time we have tonight, and look at all the models that have been prohibited by the government and are used by hunters or, in some cases, by hobbyists.

I will mention one firearm in particular. I do not know if the word translates well into French, but it is called the Plinkster. “Plinking” refers to shooting tin cans as a hobby. A model of the Plinkster, a .22-calibre rifle, has been put on the Liberal government's prohibition list. It has never been used in a shooting in Canada, mass or otherwise.

I will ask the public safety minister's parliamentary secretary a simple question: Should the owner of a Plinkster who does not sell his firearm to the government be arrested and jailed?

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, all the weapons that have been declared prohibited were selected by a committee of experts, by people who know about firearms. We are not talking about members of Parliament here, but experts who know about firearms. These weapons meet all the criteria for military-style assault firearms.

I want to reaffirm our government's commitment to upholding public safety through strict gun control. We are determined to get assault weapons off our streets, limit the devastating effects of gun violence and help make Canada safer.

Assault weapons have no place on our streets. The compensation program for individual owners was recently launched in Cape Breton and will open to the rest of the country in the fall. It will move forward, which is what most Canadians want.

[English]

FINANCE

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is October 1, 2025. The government's fiscal year is April 1 to March 31 every year. We are now seven months behind in having a budget presented to this House of Commons on how the government is going to choose what it is spending money on this year.

Budgets are important documents. I was in a synagogue in Calgary some time ago, and the rabbi and I had a discussion about the importance of budgets in religious organizations and also in governments. They are important documents because they represent choices. They represent priorities and they represent respect for other people's money.

This budget is not showing any of those. There has been no priority listed for seven months now into this fiscal year. Nobody knows what the government's priorities and choices are going to be.

Furthermore, this shows a complete disregard for other people's money. That is the money of the taxpayers of Canada, who are not getting a view of where the government is going to spend the money that they trust it with to run the services that are provided to Canadians. That is a problem. If the public does not have its eyes on exactly what the government is doing and exactly how it is go-

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ing to measure its performance, then we are missing one of the key attributes of a democratic society that has an accountable and responsible government.

One of the roles of the House of Commons is to approve not just the budget but the actual spending that goes out. It is called the estimates process. This past year, the House was prorogued for much of the year. In the last year, we sat in this House as a Parliament for less than five months. That is a diminution of the role that democracy plays in Canada. The House was prorogued for almost four months.

We had an election. In the meantime, billions of dollars were issued through what we call government awards. They were not approved by Parliament. There was no vetting of what was going on here. There was just money going out the door through the last fiscal year and into this fiscal year.

Now we are into a budget process in which we are effectively seven months behind. This is as a result of complete incompetence and a disregard for the tools of democracy that are time-tested in Canada about what we are supposed to do, how we are supposed to perform and how we are supposed to report that to Canadians.

There is a consequence to this. One of the main problems with running budget deficits is it creates inflation, particularly when the budget deficits are financed by a central bank that is printing money. That causes inflation. There is no question about that. The thing about inflation, to define what it is for people, is that it reduces their buying power for what they can purchase in society. That is the problem. It means that our rent or food costs more in real dollars. It is a tax. It means less disposable income for Canadians. It means they have to play catch-up every year. The government can inflate the dollars it is collecting and try to debase the dollars it is actually spending.

However, it is about choices at the end of the day. This year, what is the deficit going to be? We do not know. It was going to be \$50 billion, then \$60 billion. In the spring, I thought it would be \$80 billion. Then the C. D. Howe Institute came out and said it was going to be \$92 billion, yet the government continues its spending.

The solution, according to the Prime Minister, is to restate the way we report this budget.

This is not a solution. We have to get back to balanced budgets.

• (1900)

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Calgary Centre for his question.

Our government is working to implement a clear and ambitious plan to build a strong, united and resilient economy that serves Canadian businesses, workers and families. The Minister of Finance and National Revenue has already announced that he will present budget 2025 on November 4.

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We are faced with a series of historic challenges, from unjust U.S. tariffs to constantly evolving global trade standards, on top of affordability and housing concerns. Budget 2025 will seize these generational opportunities to transform our economy. It will do this through ambitious investments, increased fiscal restraint and responsible management, ensuring that every dollar is spent wisely to build the strongest economy in the G7. This budget will invest heavily in housing and infrastructure. It will spur major private investment and establish new strategic agreements with trusted partners.

At the same time, our government is introducing a new fiscal discipline in its day-to-day operations, ensuring more efficient and reliable public services. This discipline allows us to focus resources where they matter most: on sustainable growth that will ensure Canada's prosperity today and for generations to come, from coast to coast to coast, including, I would like to point out, in La Prairie—Atateken.

We are also redoubling our efforts to make housing more affordable. Thanks to the GST relief on new homes valued up to \$1 million, first-time homebuyers will be able to save up to \$50,000. For new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million, a partial GST reduction will also apply to support more Canadian families hoping to become homeowners.

Through this same legislation, we eliminated the consumer carbon tax, refocusing carbon pricing on large emitters. To cite another example, the recent launch of the Build Canada Homes program will accelerate the construction of new housing to further reduce housing costs by increasing supply. We are not only transforming Canada's housing sector, we are streamlining federal approval processes to accelerate the construction of major projects.

We are doing all of this because Canadians have given us a clear mandate: to take bold action to stimulate economic growth, create well-paying jobs and ensure that all Canadians fully benefit from the exceptional talent and ingenuity that our country is known for, whether it be our strong free trade agreements, our collective wealth or our unique prosperity.

When faced with a choice between one of the world's top economists and a career politician who has never worked a day in the private sector, Canadians spoke loud and clear. Unlike the party opposite, we heard them, and in the global context of constant change, our government can reduce costs, reinforce stability and deliver greater security and prosperity for all Canadians precisely by carrying out this mandate.

• (1905)

[English]

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken about the importance of budgets in the democratic process and in the Canadian context as well. I did not hear any response to that at all from the government side.

The issue, of course, is that these are time-tested democratic instruments that we have. We are the institution, the House of Commons, that authorize this, but Canadians have to have their eyes on what their government is spending on and why the deficits are getting so large, because it has already become a large problem, and it is going to become a bigger problem.

Let us accept that we have a government that is now run by a central banker, and central bankers have a penchant for solving the problem by printing money. Printing money is going to cause inflation, and we know this. It is time-tested and known around the world. Inflation is going to cause heartbreak and heartache in so many sectors of our economy. This is the big issue here. Will the government please get ahead of the deficit issue, because it is going to cause significant financial pain for all Canadians?

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I respect the opinion of the member for Calgary Centre.

We spent the entire summer touring the country from coast to coast to coast, and now we know what Canadians expect from this budget.

Budget 2025 is the next step in our plan to stimulate investment and build a strong, united Canadian economy that provides better-paying jobs, higher incomes and a buffer against global shocks. It will be the strongest economy in the G7.

Budget 2025 will highlight the new fiscal discipline guiding our actions: Spend less so the country can invest more. We are reducing government spending and focusing our efforts on investments that promote economic growth. Budget 2025 will be tabled on November 4.

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 7:10 p.m.)

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