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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem, led by the hon. member for Oshawa.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

YUKON-MADE CHILDREN'S WEB SERIES

Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members must check out season two of *Northern Tails* on YouTube, a televised puppet show that is Yukon-created and Yukon-produced, which premiered last week in Whitehorse.

This season, the squirrels are definitely in charge of production. Ground squirrel Scout Perry and roving reporter Michael Jay the fox are helping kids find science on the screen and, in fact, everywhere they go outside. Discovery is in the magic of the bog, the tiny, windblown lives of mosquitoes or the peregrinations of the mighty caribou.

This boreal puppet mockumentary, produced by Shot in the Dark Productions, is silly enough for kids, but approved for adults. I thank creators Kelly Milner and her late father Bob Hayes for proving that high-quality, northern-made stories can reach audiences far beyond the Yukon.

As we learn with the puppets how local species are adapting to new climate realities, let us carry that spirit of curiosity and stewardship with us. I thank its creators for supporting the stories that teach us all how to better citizens of the wild.

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WILD BIRD CONSERVATION

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1996, four dedicated women in my community of Vaudreuil recognized the need for a songbird rehabilitation centre in Quebec, so they founded Le Nichoir in Hudson. Three decades later, what started out as a

repurposed barn and a handful of volunteers has grown into a permanent, state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility, hundreds of dedicated volunteers and the rescue, rehabilitation and release of thousands of wild birds back into their natural habitats.

To the incredible staff and volunteers who give their time so generously, the students who come to learn and grow through this work, the supporters who stand behind them year after year, director Sue Wylie, chairman Peter McBride, president Wendy Dollinger and the dedicated members of the board, I thank them for their leadership.

[*Translation*]

This anniversary is a testament to the dedication of the entire Le Nichoir team.

On behalf of the residents of Vaudreuil, I want to express our gratitude for these 30 years of service, compassion and care for our community and environment. I wish the centre many more years of success.

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[*English*]

CANADA GAMES HALL OF HONOUR

Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, Colette Bourgonje will be inducted into the Canada Games Hall of Honour as a builder.

From 1992 to 2014, Bourgonje attended every winter Paralympic Games and three summer Paralympic Games, winning six medals. She is a member of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, and even has a Saskatoon public school named after her in my riding in Rosewood.

Bourgonje has coached many successful Paralympic athletes in Saskatchewan, like Brittany Hudak, who just won a bronze at this year's winter Paralympics, and Krystle Shewchuk, who was recruited by Bourgonje to compete in the 2019 and 2023 winter Canada Games.

Colette Bourgonje will be recognized tomorrow in Quebec City for the 2026 class of the Canada Games Hall of Honour.

Statements by Members

● (1405)

FIREARMS

John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, criminals are not afraid of this government, but law-abiding Canadians are.

Lawful firearms owners are not the cause of crime. Confiscating legally purchased and heavily regulated property will not stop criminals, it will not stop smuggling and it will not stop gang violence.

The public safety minister confirmed this week that the Liberals will confiscate legally owned property without fair and due compensation. The minister also said the Liberal gun grab will not be optional for police forces. How many tax dollars will be wasted searching the homes of over 2.3 million law-abiding Canadians?

Disarming Canadians and diverting police to the gun grab during a crime wave will not make anyone in Canada safer. Criminals are let off, taxpayers pay the price and law-abiding Canadians are punished. This is what happens when blind ideology replaces good old Canadian common sense.

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[*Translation*]**50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AUTISME QUÉBEC**

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoulu, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, Autisme Québec is celebrating 50 years of service to people with autism and their families in the greater Quebec City area.

In 1976, parents seeking better specialized services for people with autism launched this initiative, which is now recognized as an essential pillar of the community. Autisme Québec is part of the Fédération québécoise de l'autisme. It brings together parents, loved ones and allies who share the same mission, which is to provide better support, information and guidance. The organization works actively to promote and defend the rights of people with autism and their families. For 50 years, Autisme Québec has been helping to build a more inclusive, more respectful and more compassionate society.

I want to wish a happy 50th anniversary to Autisme Québec and its members and thank them for their commitment.

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[*English*]**GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY**

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand today in celebration of Greek Independence Day, a powerful symbol of bravery, courage, unity and the enduring human desire for freedom. On March 25, 1821, the people of Greece rose against centuries of Ottoman occupation, inspired by the Hellenic spirit, a deep love for their homeland and a belief in self-determination. Their struggle was not easy, but through resilience and sacrifice, they secured their independence and inspired movements of liberty around the world.

Greek Independence Day is a celebration of history and a reminder of the values that define a nation: freedom, democracy, the rule of law and cultural pride. These ideals, born in ancient Greece,

formed a foundation that continues to shape societies today. May their legacy continue to inspire generations to come.

I wish all my friends in Canada, Greece and across the world a happy independence day.

[*Member spoke in Greek and provided the following translation:*]

Long live liberty. Long live Greece.

[*English*]

Long live Canada.

* * *

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of a wife and a mother, Kamila. Her husband, Huseyin Celil, a Canadian citizen of Uyghur origin, was detained 20 years ago. He was on a family trip overseas and was forcibly transferred to China. He has been imprisoned ever since, without a fair trial or access to consular officials. It has been two decades since Huseyin's wife and children have heard the sound of his voice. His youngest son, who is currently 19, has never even met his father. Imagine that.

Today, we ask for clemency for Mr. Celil on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. His family deserves a phone call. Huseyin's children deserve to have their father back. Twenty years of incarceration is enough. Let humanity speak.

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[*Translation*]**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN BELLECHASSE—LES ETCEHEMINS—LÉVIS**

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the commitment of organizations that are having a positive impact in my riding.

First, I want to acknowledge the Saint-Romuald Lions Club, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary, and the Lévis Lions Club, which is celebrating its 80th. For decades, their members have been working hard to support the most vulnerable and improve the quality of life of members of our community.

I also want to recognize the Rotary Club of Lévis on the occasion of its 35th anniversary. Through their many initiatives, both in Canada and abroad, Rotary Club members embody the values of solidarity, leadership and service.

All of these committed volunteers are pillars of our community. Their often low-profile work has real and lasting impacts. On behalf of everyone in Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, I thank them. I want to congratulate these three organizations on their anniversaries and I wish them many more years of success.

Statements by Members

• (1410)

FRANCOPHONIE MONTH

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are celebrating Francophonie Month together.

When I say “we are celebrating”, that does not include the Prime Minister, the only one in ages who does not have a francophone speech writer. It also excludes Michael Rousseau, the CEO of Air Canada, who is unable to say more than a few words in French. On the other hand, it includes more than 380 million speakers across five continents.

In Quebec, this language shapes our culture and forms the very basis of our vision for society. We salute the resilience of the Quebec people, who, for over 260 years, have had to fight to preserve the status of French and who will only succeed in doing so by making Quebec a country. We also salute the courage of the francophone and Acadian communities who fight every day to use French in public.

Long live the French language and long live La Francophonie.

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[*English*]

B.C. TRADES

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important work of the Tradesman Association of British Columbia, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the skilled trades and strengthening our construction industry. Through education, safety training and professional development, the association helps tradespeople build successful careers while promoting high standards of workmanship and safety.

On March 28 and 29, the association will host its 10th annual construction expo in Surrey, welcoming thousands of visitors with free public admission. Led by president and founder Mr. Raman Sharma, this expo connects industry professionals with families and homeowners, showcases innovation and green building and supports local businesses. I commend Mr. Sharma and the Tradesman Association of BC for its leadership.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's auto industry is in crisis. Since the Liberal government took office, production is down 50%, exports are down 50%, and thousands of jobs are gone. The Liberal Prime Minister thinks we should surrender, but Conservatives say we should act.

We put forward a new auto pact, with real solutions to make it easier to build and buy Canadian, restore free trade and protect blue-collar paycheques. It is about more than the jobs of today. It is also about the jobs of tomorrow and the next generation of workers who are dreaming of a future in the skilled trades. It is about the good-paying jobs that have formed the foundations of our communities for generations.

Instead of supporting our plan to protect Canada's auto industry, the Liberal government voted against it. They have no plan to se-

cure tariff-free access to the U.S. market. They only show up with empty words instead of working with Conservatives to support common-sense policies.

Canadian auto workers were watching that vote yesterday, and they see that only Canada's Conservatives are serious about protecting Canadian jobs and Canadian sovereignty.

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

Ginette Lavack (St. Boniface—St. Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, March 20 was the International Day of La Francophonie. In honour of the occasion, I want to draw the House's attention to the vitality and resilience of francophone communities across the country, especially those in Manitoba. French is alive and well in every part of the province. We see it at our festivals, we hear it in our schools and we experience it in our organizations, businesses and communities.

Of course, I am especially proud of my riding of St. Boniface—St. Vital, where we can see, every day, through our culture, creativity and sense of community that French is thriving. The French language continues to evolve with us within open, diverse and forward-looking communities. People can live in French, work in French, laugh in French and, yes, sometimes even stumble over their words in French. In the end, what matters is that French is alive and well. Although it is a few days after the fact, let us take some time to proudly, enthusiastically and joyfully celebrate our francophone community.

* * *

• (1415)

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are three months into the new year and Canadians are seeing more of the same from the Liberal government. The Prime Minister has made promise after promise to improve Canada's finances but, as the months go by, the government has failed to deliver a single positive economic outcome. The Liberals promised the best G7 economy, but instead, Canada sits at last place. In fact, Canada's economy is the only shrinking economy in the G7. It also has the highest household debt and the highest food inflation.

The Liberals promised more jobs, but in the first two months of 2026 alone, Canada has lost more than 100,000 jobs. They want to chalk these problems up to global factors, but if they want someone to blame, they should look in the mirror. Our fellow G7 members deal with the same global factors we do, yet these problems are worse here in Canada than they are anywhere else in the world.

Canadians are done with these Liberals passing the buck. It is time for them to step up and deliver the results they promised or get out of the way so that Conservatives can deliver it for them.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ORGANIZATIONS IN HONORÉ-MERCIER

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the Hill some incredible organizations from Honoré-Mercier, including SARA d'Anjou, 1,2,3 GO! Rivière-des-Prairies, the Rivière-des-Prairies youth employment centre, the Anjou—Saint-Justin youth employment centre, Aîné-es J'écoute en actions, the Pointe-de-l'île de Montréal chapter of the AQDR, La Maison des jeunes de Rivière-des-Prairies, the CFHI, Regroupement Jeunesse en Action, the CDC de RDP, Le Phare, SAC Anjou, the RDP soccer club, ASEC Montréal, AIEM and the Anjou women's centre, along with members of several seniors' clubs, including Il Faro, Parc Cipriani, Le Fiamme d'Oro, the Rivière-des-Prairies Abruzzese folklore group, Résidence la Seigneurie d'Anjou, Résidence Au Fil de l'Eau and the A.I.A.P.A.

I also want to acknowledge the presence of Gerlando Guarraggi and wish our colleague Samiha a happy birthday.

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[English]

AFFORDABILITY

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we cannot control what happens abroad, but the Liberals do control the policies here at home that are making life more expensive for all Canadians. Canada now has the highest food price inflation in the G7 and the only shrinking economy.

While fuel prices are soaring, Canadians are paying even more at the pump because of Liberal policies. Gas in Canada averages \$1.70 per litre. Members can compare that to \$1.45 in the United States. That is nearly 26¢ more per litre. The Prime Minister's industrial carbon tax and fuel standard are already driving up costs, yet he still plans to raise the fuel standard to 17¢ a litre.

These costs affect all Canadians. Higher costs to produce and ship food push grocery prices even higher. The Prime Minister cannot hide behind global factors. These are Liberal costs imposed at home, and it is Canadians who are paying for it.

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[Translation]

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 25, 1821, the Greek War of Independence began with an insurrection led by such revolutionaries as the heroic Theodoros Kolokotronis, Laskarina Boukoulina and Rigas Feraios, who wrote that it is finer to live one hour as a free man than 40 years as a slave and prisoner.

[English]

Today, Greeks around the world celebrate Greek Independence Day to honour the women and men who fought with courage, pride and determination for the freedom of their people, for future generations of Greeks and for the liberation of Greece.

As modern-day Greeks and people of Greek origin, we owe our freedom to these heroes and remember them year after year by holding various events in their honour. This year is particularly special for Montreal's Greek community as it marks the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal's 120th anniversary.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the various celebratory events, including this Sunday's Greek Independence Day parade.

[Member spoke in Greek]

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Auditor General condemned the current Liberal Minister of Justice, the current Liberal Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and the current Liberal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship for causing chaos on the international student file. The fact is that they allowed 150,000 suspected cases of fraud to go uninvestigated. The Prime Minister gave them promotions so that they could continue to wreak havoc in the system.

Will he fire them or will he continue with the same Liberal incompetence?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am blessed with a strong cabinet that is working hard for a strong Canada. Canada's new government is regaining control of the immigration system. Asylum claims are down by a third. The number of international students has fallen by 70%. We have a strong Canada and a balanced immigration system.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Liberals are the same as the old Liberals. The numbers the Prime Minister just gave can be compared to the even more miserable numbers of his justice minister. In fact, compared to the Harper government, which had the last sane policy on immigration, asylum claims are now up 2880%, temporary foreign workers are up 178% and international students are up 39%.

Yesterday, the Auditor General condemned the current Liberal justice minister, the Liberal heritage minister and Liberal immigration minister for allowing 150,000 cases of fraud to go uninvestigated.

Will the Prime Minister fire them, or will he just continue with the same Liberal incompetence?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am blessed with a strong cabinet that is working hard for a strong country.

We are taking control of the immigration system. Asylum seekers are down by a third, foreign students are down by 60% and temporary foreign workers are down by 50%. The population equilibrated, is equal.

We are investigating 100% of the fraud cases since the new government came to office. We have the system under control.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is all illusion. It is the same old Liberals, the same old failures.

Look at the economy. The Prime Minister likes to blame world affairs for his failing economy. The G7 countries have the same world economy, yet he has delivered the second-highest unemployment in the G7, the worst household debt in the G7, the worst housing costs in the G7 and the only shrinking economy in the G7. We have had 100,000 lost jobs in the last two months alone.

Why is it that, after the Prime Minister promised that he would be the first, he is the worst in the G7?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at what has happened since this summer. The United States has lost 6,000—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: These are important issues that we are discussing, and Canadians are watching.

The right hon. Prime Minister may begin from the top.

Right Hon. Mark Carney: Mr. Speaker, let us look at what has happened to the United States since the summer. It has lost 6,000 jobs. This country has created over 80,000 jobs since August.

Let us look at what has happened to wages in this country. They are growing the highest in years at 4%. They are growing twice the rate of inflation. Canadians are getting ahead every single month with this government.

Canadian wages have grown faster than the rate of inflation. Rents are at a 33-month low. Affordability is the best it has been in over a decade.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess those people who stash their cash in tax havens have never had it so good and so affordable. Tell that to the single mother who is walking down the grocery aisle.

Let us talk about jobs. The Prime Minister compares us to the United States. When we do an apples-to-apples comparison of unemployment, it is 1.3% higher in Canada than it is in the U.S. In fact, Canada has the second-highest unemployment in the G7, the worst grocery inflation in the G7, the most unaffordable housing in the G7 and the worst household debt in the G7. He promised we would be first, so why is he the worst?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the lowest debt burden in the G7. We have the lowest deficit in the G7. We have the highest credit rating in the G7. What is this government doing? It is putting it into action with a defence

Oral Questions

industrial strategy that will bring half a trillion dollars of investment. With an auto strategy, with an electricity strategy, with a climate competitiveness strategy and with a housing strategy, we are moving forward. We are investing in this country, the second-best country in the world for foreign direct investment. We are moving forward. Come join us.

* * *

• (1425)

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, strategies and imaginary promises will not pay the bills or fill the tank. We all know that global oil prices have gone up, but that does not explain why in Canadian dollars and in litres, Americans pay \$1.46 a litre at the pump while Canadians are paying \$1.70. That is 26¢ higher per litre at the pump because of the Prime Minister's anti-energy policies and his newly renamed carbon tax, the clean fuel standard.

Will he get rid of these policies and get rid of that tax so Canadians can have some relief at the pumps?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite was not here in the spring. It is a source of great sadness. We got rid of the consumer carbon tax. That took off 18¢ per litre. What matters is the rate of growth of wages relative to overall inflation. Wages are growing at twice the rate. This country is moving forward.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): It is all an illusion, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister not only supported the carbon tax that he advised Justin Trudeau to put in, but thought it should be higher and broader. When he got into power, he did not get rid of it; he renamed it. He called it the Clean Fuel Standard, 7¢ a litre this year rising to 17¢ on top of an industrial carbon tax that is driving up the costs of all the industrial production of our energy. That is one of the reasons that, under the Liberal Prime Minister, Canadians pay the equivalent of 26¢ a litre more than the Americans pay.

Will he stop ripping off Canadians at the pump and get rid of these Liberal taxes so Canadians can get moving?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are getting this country moving with the biggest transformation of this economy in generations. We are building unprecedented amounts of affordable housing. We are building clean energy. We are lowering energy costs for Canadians. We are building a defence industrial strategy that this country has not seen since the Second World War. We are protecting Canadians. We are building this economy. We are empowering Canadians across the country.

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[Translation]

JUSTICE

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to make one thing very clear: The Bloc Québécois fully respects freedom of conscience, freedom of belief and freedom of religion. That is true for all people, including the Prime Minister. Yesterday, the Prime Minister quoted the Bible in a speech. That is his prerogative, but I would like some clarification on what has become a critical issue in light of recent events.

Does the Prime Minister support the principle of state secularism and the separation of church and state?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, yesterday, in the presence of the Leader of the Opposition, members of the NDP, the leader of the Green Party and even the Speaker of the House, I quoted the Bible and I also quoted Marcus Aurelius, like the Leader of the Opposition. That is because there are some principles that are universal. I am talking about virtues, values and examples. These are examples of virtue, examples of determination. Above all, it is the example of Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the first word he said was “yes”. That is where the clarity ends. I assume that the Prime Minister believes, as I do and as all members do, that religion and the state are two separate things, one being personal and the other being public and collective, and that religion should not interfere in state decisions.

That being the case, can the Prime Minister explain why his government spent millions of taxpayer dollars, some of which came from Quebec, to task Crown attorneys to block and render ineffective a Quebec law that had been duly passed by the Quebec National Assembly ensuring the separation of church and state?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a fundamental question. The opposition member's question has to do with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is the federal government's responsibility to defend the charter. Proceedings are currently under way before the Supreme Court of Canada. We are awaiting the outcome.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is one or the other, and the Prime Minister is going to have to make up his mind. Either he acknowledges that religion plays a role and directly influences how his government and the Liberal Party manage government affairs, or he stops challenging Bill 21, which sets out rules for the secular nature of Quebec's state institutions.

The Prime Minister cannot say and defend one thing and its opposite. He will have to take a stand and provide an answer.

Can he tell us, yes or no, whether he truly agrees with the principle of the separation of church and state?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a false dichotomy. The Bloc Québécois just made a choice about Bill C-9. It is Parliament's responsibility to protect the rights of religious communities, such as the Jewish community here in Canada, against hate. I am puzzled: Why did the opposition member support Bill C-9, which addresses this issue?

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals do not control what happens abroad, they do control their policies here at home. Instead of working to bring costs down, the Liberal Prime Minister is not only going ahead with his industrial carbon tax, but has introduced a fuel standard tax, which adds 7¢ a litre to the already high cost of gas and will eventually rise to 17¢ per litre. It is more of the same Liberal taxes from the same Liberal government.

When will the Liberal government give Canadians a break and get rid of these Liberal gas taxes that are making life more expensive for Canadian families?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be able to stand up here once again to reiterate and remind the members opposite that the industrial carbon price does not increase the cost of food. Studies show that, but if they want to talk about what we can do to help Canadians, I hope that they will celebrate alongside me that our government cut taxes for Canadians. That is a win.

They can talk about imaginary taxes. Over here, we are taking real action on affordability.

Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are paying more because of Liberal policies here at home. All G7 countries are dealing with similar external factors, but it is only the Liberal government that has caused us to have the worst food inflation and the only shrinking economy in the G7. The price of gas is 20% higher here than it is in the U.S., and Liberal fuel and carbon taxes are making it even worse.

When will the Liberal government stop passing the buck, take responsibility for its policies and finally cut Liberal taxes to make life more affordable for Canadians?

Oral Questions

The list goes on and on, but no matter what it is, the Conservatives vote against it. Why do they not support Canadians?

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THE ECONOMY

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where that member has been, but on this side of the House, we are going to continue to focus on affordability for Canadians. We cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We cut the GST for first-time homebuyers. We cut the consumer carbon tax. On this side, we are going to continue to focus on and build the strongest economy in the G7. It is time for that party, that leader and that member to stop the obstruction and stop the rhetoric.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford the cost of living, and the Liberals think the best way to get Canadians back on their feet is to miss three car payments. That is the problem. Their decisions keep making life more expensive. As gas prices skyrocket, the government is making things worse with its industrial carbon tax and the fuel standard tax. The Liberals point to global instability, but it is the Prime Minister who is choosing to make Canadians pay even more at the pump.

Why will the Liberals not remove the tax on gas and give Canadians a break?

• (1435)

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that oil price shocks due to the war in the Middle East are rippling across the world and increasing the cost of living pressures on Canadians here at home. That is why we recently worked with our international partners to release hundreds of millions of barrels of Canadian oil as part of an effort to provide stability for businesses and consumers. We cannot unblock the Strait of Hormuz, but we can control what we do here at home. We have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians, offered a groceries and essentials benefit and offered a national school food program. That saves families hundreds and thousands of dollars per month.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, gas prices are 26¢ higher in Canada than in the U.S., and Liberal policies are forcing Canadians to skip meals, defer dreams and fall behind on bills. That is because we are the only country with a shrinking economy in the G7 as well as having the worst food inflation. While Canadians are being forced into hard choices, the Liberal government has a simple choice: It can scrap the taxes that are driving up fuel costs so Canadians pay less at the pump.

Will the Liberals finally take responsibility for what they can control and axe these taxes?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe the member remembers voting against all of the measures that actually make life more affordable. For example, there is early learning and child care here in Ontario, which is saving a family with one child \$16,000 a year. For example, there was the announcement we just made yesterday to ensure students can access up to 40% more in student grants, which is going to make sure that student accessibility to education remains affordable.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every G7 country faces global headwinds, yet only one is choosing to make inflation worse through domestic policy. Canada now leads the G7 in food price inflation, carries the only shrinking G7 economy and faces fuel costs nearly 20% higher than the United States, because the Liberal government is adding an industrial carbon tax and a fuel standard tax that will reach 17¢ per litre.

If the Prime Minister cannot name a single G7 country that is following this declining trend, what justification does this one have for doubling down on this failed path?

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives continue to talk down this economy and talk down our workers, we are building it up. Why? It is because we have a plan to make life more affordable. We cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We have taken the GST off first-time homebuyers, and we are investing in our auto sector, our steel sector and our aluminum sector. Why? There is a trade war on, and we are backing real families, real companies and real jobs.

Why do they not get on board and support real workers?

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking down the economy. The Liberals are bringing down the economy.

A recent survey shows that 84% of farmers think the Prime Minister is an epic failure. I am wondering if the Prime Minister could tell me which one of his policies have made farmers so angry. Is it the fact that the Liberals are closing seven research centres and firing hundreds of scientists? Is it because we are the only G7 country with a 35% tariff on fertilizer imports? Is it the fuel standard or the industrial carbon tax, which goes up again on April 1?

Which one of these policies is the reason the Prime Minister is an epic failure?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member would like to talk about farmers, and canola farmers specifically, let us talk about how the clean fuel regulations actually help canola farmers. It adds to the value of a bushel of canola.

Oral Questions

The Leader of the Opposition may want to speak to some of his constituents. He represents the second-largest canola-producing riding in all of Alberta, and right next to him is the Strathcona renewable diesel facility that is going to purchase about half of Alberta's canola production. That is good for farmers.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to know that the Liberals' fuel regulations are so complicated and has made it so expensive that three-quarters of the feedstock comes from the United States or used cooking oil from China, not canola farmers in Alberta. It is the clean fuel standard, the industrial carbon tax, the escalator tax and tariffs on fertilizer that are making food unaffordable and farming unsustainable.

Will the Liberals realize that it is their own policies that are causing these problems? Will they cancel their fuel tax, their industrial carbon tax and their escalator tax and help make Canadians' life more affordable?

● (1440)

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we eliminated the divisive consumer carbon price, and they are still complaining.

We know that the industrial carbon tax has a negligible effect on food. If the member goes out and buys an F-150 Ford tomorrow from the highest emissions contributor of steel and aluminum in this country, I can tell him that he can go back to the Leader of the Opposition and get his triple-triple, because it is cheaper than what it is costing us in GHG emissions.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals keep saying that they will not comment on the Supreme Court's proceedings regarding Bill 21 and the notwithstanding clause.

However, they are holding a convention in Montreal the weekend before the election in the riding of Terrebonne, and the first proposal they will be debating is whether to give the federal government veto power over all provincial legislation that invokes the notwithstanding clause before court challenges are exhausted. That is the first item on their agenda.

The Liberals may not be willing to comment on the court's proceedings, but they will have to vote on this proposal. How are they going to vote?

The Speaker: That question does not pertain to federal government affairs.

I will allow the hon. member to ask his second question.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is written in black and white: "...that the Liberal Party of Canada urge the Government of Canada to: Invoke disallowance on any Provincial legislation that proactively invokes the Notwithstanding clause before court challenges are exhausted".

That is what they want, but they are trying to get the Supreme Court to do their dirty work for them. If the Liberals want to change the Constitution, then they should reopen it.

Will they have the courage to do that instead of hiding behind the courts?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government clearly has a responsibility and an obligation to defend the Constitution. It is possible to defend the French language and the right of francophones to live in French, while also defending the Constitution.

This is not the right place to have this debate since the matter is before the Supreme Court of Canada. This is not the appropriate forum, since this issue is being deliberated in court. That is the best place for these discussions.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister was elected a year ago on a promise that he would build the strongest economy in the G7. Here we are one year later, and things are still not on track. In the first two months of this year alone, 100,000 Canadians lost their job. Ours is the only G7 economy that is shrinking. We have had the highest spike in unemployment in the G7 and we have the worst food inflation in the G7.

Do the Prime Minister and his government realize that their policies are not working?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand that there are many factors affecting food prices, including international developments such as rising fertilizer prices.

What we can control are the measures that we are putting in place to address affordability, namely a tax cut for 22 million Canadians. The Canada groceries and essentials benefit is helping more than 12 million Canadians and it represents roughly \$1,800 per family. We are not stopping there, because there are other things within our control. Canada's defence industrial strategy will create 125,000 jobs in Quebec with investments in the Davie shipyard in Quebec City and the Valcartier military base.

I hope the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk will support us.

● (1445)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have bad news for the government, but especially for Canadians: The Liberals' policies are not working. There are 100,000 Canadians—100,000 men and women, 100,000 families—who have lost their jobs. That is the reality after 10 years of Liberal government and after one year of this new Prime Minister. He claims that this is happening all over the world.

Oral Questions

If the impacts are being felt the world over, why do Canadians, here in Canada, have to deal with the highest food inflation in the G7? That is unacceptable.

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is unacceptable is that at every turn, whenever the member opposite had the opportunity to truly support his constituents through measures like the Canada child benefit, the Canadian dental care plan, a tax cut or the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, he voted against them. That is what is regrettable.

What are we doing on this side of the House? We are building the strongest economy in the G7 with Canada's defence industrial strategy, with major projects like the one at Nouveau Monde Graphite, where 1,300 new jobs have just been announced. That is what we are doing on this side of the House.

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that Canada would be the best-performing economy in the G7, yet here we are as the worst: more than 100,000 jobs lost in two months, the second-highest unemployment rate, the highest household debt and the highest food inflation in the G7. Instead of solving the problem, the Prime Minister continues to block projects, impose taxes on production, and inflate the deficit at the expense of Canadians.

How can this Liberal government say that everything is fine when its decisions are hurting families and the economy?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am listening to my colleague. I have a lot of respect for him and we work on a number of issues together, yet I fail to understand why he refuses to acknowledge that, as a result of this government's decisions that prioritize Canadian procurement, suddenly new jobs are being created in his riding in La Pocatière at Alstom. Why does he not ask us about that? I am sure that the people of La Pocatière are very happy. This will affect the entire services sector, the entire sector all across his region.

The same goes for the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, who just asked the Quebec lieutenant a question. We are investing in the Quebec City area. We are making sure that Davie will have more—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's Cúram financial fiasco continues. After \$5 billion in cost overruns, officials themselves have admitted that they do not know the exact future costs, suggesting that yearly operating costs could exceed \$660 million to \$1 billion. Cúram is the most costly Liberal scandal in history.

My question is simple. Will the Prime Minister show some leadership and will he take over this file himself?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant,

Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to modernizing the payment of benefits, it is important to understand that the system we are replacing is 50 years old and was jeopardizing our seniors' old age security pensions. Changing the system was not an option.

From what I am seeing, the transition is going well for 7.7 million seniors whose benefits are being delivered accurately and on time. Service Canada employees have been dedicated to chipping away at the backlog for months.

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to *Le Journal de Québec*, the Liberal government has paid out over \$211 million in cost overruns to Accenture, an external IT consulting firm. Accenture recruits developers for the Cúram system and outsources the jobs to India. Both there and here in Canada, Accenture is one of the largest tenants of a company the Prime Minister knows well: Brookfield.

Has it become the norm for Liberals to use taxpayer money to make well-connected firms richer and to serve the interests of the Prime Minister while citizens foot the bill?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to see that the benefit payments system is being modernized. That needed to be done.

In fact, according to the Auditor General's 2014 report, the 50-year-old system was leading us straight into a wall. It was unsustainable. It cost a fortune to maintain. It is good that we are moving toward a modern system that ensures that our seniors receive their benefits on time and in the correct amounts. There are 7.7 million Canadians who depend on this system.

We are moving forward and modernizing how benefits are delivered.

* * *

● (1450)

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chris d'Entremont (Acadie—Annapolis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent Acadie—Annapolis, a predominantly rural riding in Nova Scotia that I have always called home.

[*English*]

I recognize the value of small and medium-sized businesses, whether it is engaging with business owners or supporting them in my daily life. However, we know that rural business owners often struggle with less access to financing, smaller markets, a tighter pool of workers and longer supply chains.

Oral Questions

To the minister responsible for ACOA, how is the Government of Canada supporting small and medium-sized businesses in Acadie—Annapolis and in Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his advocacy for economic growth in Atlantic Canada. I would like to point out that he once served as the critic for Atlantic Canadian economic development, before he joined the governing benches. Despite almost five months passing, the Conservatives have yet to appoint a successor, despite having good Atlantic Canadians they could put in the position.

To my colleague's question, we are advancing new programs to help small and medium-sized businesses deal with American tariffs and to help small firms become big firms by tapping into the defence industrial strategy. We have not forgotten what built our economy, including the fishery, which the member has been a champion for to restore the Atlantic fisheries fund and to remove Asian tariffs on Nova Scotian seafood. We need more champions like this in government.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope it was worth it. Under the Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is losing jobs at speeds not seen in a generation. Over 100,000 full-time jobs were lost in one month alone, and close to 50,000 youth jobs were lost.

In the G7, we have the only shrinking economy, the second-highest unemployment, the highest household debt and the highest food inflation. The Liberal rhetoric simply does not match the reality.

Why can the Liberals not recognize the problems that their policies are causing and adopt the Conservatives' jobs plan?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Conservatives' jobs plan is, because they vote against every single thing, including the things that unions have said they need.

We are investing in skills training for young people. We are moving forward with a defence industrial strategy that is creating 125,000 jobs, the major projects are estimated to support over 60,000 jobs and we are ensuring that workers have the training they need.

These are all things the Conservatives fight against. What exactly is their jobs strategy? Is it to do nothing?

* * *

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we released a detailed jobs plan in the fall. The Liberals' approach is clearly failing. Over 100,000 jobs have been lost. They talk about major projects, but they have not approved a single major project.

Canadians at home are experiencing the catastrophic impact of Liberal policies. The Liberals promised a trade win. They have not delivered it. The industrial carbon tax remains in place. Objectively, we are shedding jobs at rates not seen in a generation.

Will the Liberals stop patting themselves on the back and actually recognize the challenges Canadians are facing?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here are a few facts for the member. Joint support ships will provide 3,500 jobs. Arctic and offshore patrol ships will provide 2,300 jobs. Remotely piloted aircraft systems will provide 700 jobs annually. River-class destroyers will provide 5,250 jobs. Logistics vehicle modernization will provide 1,000 jobs. Armoured combat support vehicles will provide 1,650 jobs. The list goes on and on.

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THE ECONOMY

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised Canadians the strongest economy in the G7. Instead, Canada now has the only shrinking economy and the second-highest unemployment. We have lost over 100,000 jobs since January of this year, and many of our small businesses are going to the United States. Other countries are dealing with the same problems and the same global pressures.

Will the Prime Minister admit his policies are failing Canadians and outline why our economy is the worst in the G7?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since September, Canada's economy has created 80,000 jobs. We know that, in times of global uncertainty, we need to invest. That is why we have made the largest infrastructure investment in Canadian history.

We are building big, we are building bold and we are building now, with Canadian steel, Canadian lumber and Canadian unionized workers. We are laser-focused on creating jobs: good jobs in the skilled trades and good jobs for future generations.

When will the Conservatives get on board?

Oral Questions

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the gravity of the situation is hitting the government appropriately. In the last two decades, Canada has lost 100,000 entrepreneurs, but our population has gone up by 10 million people. Since 2019, there has been a 19% increase in business exits, with only a 5% increase in new businesses. Nothing the government is doing is helping our entrepreneurs, our job creators.

When will the government reverse its horrible economic policies and get out of the way so businesses can thrive?

• (1455)

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on delivering results, which includes increasing business confidence. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reported very recently that small business optimism is at the highest level in two years.

That is because, on this side of the House, we are ensuring that we are cutting red tape for small and medium-sized enterprises. We are investing in them and ensuring that, as we expand to new markets and new countries, they have all the opportunities to be able to export and to grow their businesses. We will always be there for them.

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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised the strongest economy in the G7. Instead, Canada is at the bottom. We have the only shrinking economy, the second-highest unemployment, the highest household debt and the worst food inflation in the G7. The Prime Minister cannot hide behind global challenges when every other G7 country faces the exact same pressures. These problems did not appear overnight. They are a direct result of bad Liberal policies.

Will the Prime Minister reverse course on the policies that have left Canada with a shrinking economy, soaring food prices and rising unemployment?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is picking up the same lines like a soon-to-be-gifted kettlebell, but these repetitions will not get them the gains they seek, because they require Canadians to forget everything before yesterday. We are in a trade war, and in that trade war we are performing very well. We are getting more jobs than the United States. We have foreign direct investment at the highest level in 18 years. Alberta's unemployment decreased by 0.4 points this year. There is much to celebrate, because we have a strong focus on building the economy and we are seeing results.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Albertans know that the member lives in an illusion. There are no projects that have been approved by the government and no shovels in the ground. For years, the Liberal government did everything in its power to block pipelines, stall major energy projects and scare off investment, weakening one of Canada's most critical economic drivers, the oil sands. Canadians are now paying

the price. With a shrinking economy and over 100,000 jobs already lost this year, the consequences are clear.

Will the Prime Minister finally reverse course, unleash Canada's energy sector and help rebuild our economy?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, oil and gas production in Canada is at record highs, up 34% in the last 10 years. We have managed to do that while reducing emissions in our country by 6%. We have found a way to sustainably grow and meet the growing needs of the world, including diversifying needs from allies that are increasingly requiring lower carbon emissions. We are building strong. We have approved Ksi Lisims, the Taylor to Gordondale pipeline, NexGen's and Denison's uranium mines. TMX optimization is under way. There are LNG projects, from Cedar to Woodfibre, Tilbury and LNG Canada phase two. They are happening. We are building strong, and we welcome you to join us in that building.

The Speaker: All questions and answers must be directed through the Chair.

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THE ECONOMY

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised Canadians the strongest economy in the G7, but today we are falling behind. We now have the only shrinking economy in the G7 and among the highest unemployment and the highest household debt. In rural communities, families are being hit really hard. Farmers and producers are facing soaring input costs and blocked resource projects that drive local economies. Canada is struggling because of Liberal policies that have stifled growth.

When will the Prime Minister turn from these failed policies that have left Canadians behind?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the economy, the leader opposite is missing in action. The member is a good man. I respect his faith very much. On this side of the House, we are focused on building a strong economy, the strongest economy in the G7. We are investing in nation-building projects, like Port Saint John in my riding. We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars that will employ thousands of people. What about the Sisson mine, a nation-building project, a major project, in the member's riding, which will employ thousands of people?

Oral Questions

On this side of the House, we are serious about building a strong economy. The other side simply is not.

• (1500)

Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are hurting. The Prime Minister promised Canadians the best, yet our economy is performing among the worst. We have lost over 100,000 jobs in the first two months of this year, and our economy is beginning to shrink. If this is the result of global factors, as the Liberals claim, why is our economy performing so poorly compared to those of other G7 countries?

Will the Prime Minister work with us to reverse the disastrous economic policies that have made it harder for Canadians to put food on the table?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are making life more affordable, not just in big cities but across northern and indigenous communities. We have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians so northern families can keep more on their table. The permanent national school food program is saving families around \$800 a year, and we are tackling food costs by building an all-season infrastructure road through the Arctic. We are building the nation and building scalable affordability. We are also reforming nutrition north.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's rhetoric is completely disconnected from reality. He said that Canada would be the best economy in the G7, yet he has delivered the worst, as 100,000 jobs are gone in two months. Here is Canada's G7 record. Canada has the only shrinking economy, the highest food inflation, the highest household debt and the second-highest unemployment. He continues to point to global pressures, but every other G7 country is facing the exact same problems. Their economies are growing and ours is shrinking.

This is a domestic failure made in Canada by the Liberal government. When will they reverse their economic policies that are failing Canadians?

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition wants to close its eyes and have a fantasy that the trade war will go away and that the tariffs will go away. It does not work like that. They have to have a plan. They have to invest in their workers. They have to invest in affordable housing. They have to invest in national defence. They have to invest in Canadians and their workers, including those making auto parts, as we are doing with the Federal Economic Development Agency in many Conservative ridings.

Let me boil it down simply. They have to believe in Canada, buy in Canada and build in Canada. They should try that.

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[Translation]

HOUSING

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, accelerating housing construction is key to im-

proving affordability. That is why Build Canada Homes is working with partners across the country to launch new projects. Last week, I had the great pleasure of participating in an announcement with my colleagues to deliver some very good news to New Brunswickers.

Can the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure update the House on this recent housing announcement in New Brunswick?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. We have some good news for New Brunswick. Through Build Canada Homes, we are working with partners to build 1,200 affordable housing units, with the potential to increase this number to 1,500 housing units. These projects are ready to move forward quickly, and nearly half of these units will use modern building methods to speed up construction.

Together with our partners, we are building more homes for all Canadians.

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[English]

JUSTICE

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no community in this country will be protected from hate with legislation that threatens to imprison them for deeply and sincerely held religious beliefs, but that is precisely what Bill C-9 would do. This is a bill the Liberals are forcing to a vote today despite the cries of millions of Canadians from multiple faiths and civil society groups that this bill would violate their civil liberties. It may appease some people, like the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture, who believes one needs a black highlighter to read a holy text, but most Canadians want the freedom to live out their beliefs.

Will the Liberals do the right thing, and reduce this divisive and toxic bill to the rubble bin where it belongs?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the member's colleagues from Windsor included in her flyer those same tired talking points. The Windsor Star spoke to some of her constituents, who said that her flyer was divisive, inflammatory and insulting to their intelligence, and that they were more concerned with the misinformation from the Conservatives than with the content of the bill.

Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, is designed to protect religious freedoms, to ensure people of faith can practise within their community of faith without fear of intimidation or obstruction, and to make sure we recognize the moral culpability when a person is targeted for a crime on the basis of their identity. That is good policy that would keep Canadians safe.

• (1505)

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Liberals are getting their money's worth with their media bailout, but that does not eliminate the many concerns that Canadians have raised across this country. The Liberals say, when these civil liberties concerns are put at their feet, to just trust them that they will not violate charter rights, because the charter protects those rights. However, last week, that very Attorney General appealed the Federal Court of Appeal decision that ruled the use of the Emergencies Act unlawful and found that the government, despite the promises of Justin Trudeau, did violate the constitutional rights of Canadians. If the Liberals truly are serious about protecting these rights, why will they not drop their appeal and drop Bill C-9?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems the Conservative strategy when they lose an argument is to blame the media and throw spaghetti at the wall to see what sticks. Let us actually talk about the facts.

Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, from inception, was designed to protect religious freedoms, to combat hate crimes that were taking place in this country, to protect the ability of the Jewish community to go to their synagogues and the Muslim community their mosques and Christian communities their churches, and to ensure people could pray freely without fear of intimidation or obstruction. We heard loud and clear that people are sick and tired of hate crimes in this country and want their government to do something about it. The Conservative option is to send out fundraising emails. We are—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Emergencies Act has been ruled unlawful by the courts twice. The Liberals violated the charter rights of Canadians by freezing their bank accounts when the threat of a national security threshold was never met. They have wasted millions of dollars of taxpayer money, and now they are appealing this court decision for a third time. With an affordability crisis and a jobs crisis, will the Liberals quit wasting taxpayer monies on something that the courts have twice ruled is unlawful?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the Conservatives never tire of standing up for the people who illegally occupied the main street of our nation's capital, refused to leave, were implored to leave by local residents and the police, and were asked politely but refused to leave this city and this capital that Canadians are so proud of.

The real question is, why do the Conservatives continue to stand up for the convoy and lawlessness in this country?

Oral Questions

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Paul Connors (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is strategically located to bolster Canada's defence strategy. Our new government is committed to spending 2% of GDP on defence this year and 5% by 2035.

My question is very simple: Will Newfoundland and Labrador have an opportunity to play a role in the defence strategy?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Newfoundland and Labrador is completely right. Our province was made for this moment. That is why I was proud last week to announce a federal investment of \$16 million in Newfoundland and Labrador companies to build a stronger industrial base for defence manufacturing in our province.

That means good jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to build more of what Canada needs at this time to stay strong, secure and sovereign.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the west coast we do not just live near the ocean. We live on it. Time on the water is how we connect with friends, clear our heads and put food on the table. It is practically therapy, and we might even catch dinner, but now the Liberals are putting 9,100 jobs and a \$1.76-billion industry at risk with proposed changes to the salmon allocation policy.

Will this east coast minister show respect for our west coast way of life by committing right now to maintaining priority for public fisheries and certainty of public access to salmon to feed our families?

• (1510)

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not need lessons from the other side on standing up for harvesters. I will remind the member of the opposition that I spoke to this yesterday. We had a one-year consultation on a policy that was not reviewed since 1999. With one year open, we will be working through what we heard. We will have a decision in due course, and I will let the member know.

No decision has been made.

*Points of Order***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Donald Trump's attack on Iran is not only illegal and causing death and destruction but spreading economic chaos around the globe. Canadians are now seeing sky-high gas prices, and the cost of products from fertilizers to food are going to soar, bringing pain to every household. Economists predict that the world will face massive turmoil for years to come.

What does the Prime Minister say to Canadians who are suffering serious financial harm as a result of the senseless war that he and the Conservatives supported?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is deeply concerned by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which is threatening global energy security and economic stability. As we have emphasized, Canada's focus is on ensuring the safe and unimpeded flow of energy and commerce in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We urge all parties to de-escalate the conflict, and we will continue to work alongside our G7 and like-minded allies to ensure the Strait of Hormuz remains open and secure.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Searle Turton, Minister of Children and Family Services for the province of Alberta.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Earlier, you rejected a question from my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord. The underlying intent of that question was to determine whether the government plans to veto the notwithstanding clause. I would argue that the answer to that question pertains specifically to the administration of the government, regardless of who asks the question.

By your logic, I would not be able to ask a question regarding the administration of the House as soon as I point out, for example, that the question was also raised by the National Assembly of Quebec. For example, if I were to ask a question about whether the government will call a public inquiry into Cúram, and if I mention that this is also a request from the National Assembly of Quebec, I would be barred from doing so. What matters is the question and the content of the answer.

I would also point out that, in the context of what we are discussing, the person making the request is important. At the upcoming Liberal Party convention, the members of the House sitting before me, who, I assume, are all members of the Liberal Party, will all have the right to vote at that convention and will essentially be granting themselves a mandate through the vote they will cast on the issue and the proposal—

The Speaker: From what I heard, the first question was not phrased in a manner consistent with the Standing Orders. It was re-

lated to party affairs and nothing else. The connection the hon. member is drawing between government members and their party affiliation is, in my view, very indirect. Furthermore, I would like to point out that the second question was better phrased and related to government administration.

The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, at the risk of repeating myself, you have nonetheless prevented a member from asking a question simply because it was related to a party's mandate. I want to reiterate that, in this instance, MPs cannot be dissociated from their role as party members because, as such, they are voting at the convention and giving themselves a mandate. When viewed in that context, the question was entirely relevant.

I submit to you that refusing to allow that question demonstrates a bias and a kind of partisanship that do not become you.

● (1515)

The Speaker: According to the Standing Orders, questions concerning a party's internal affairs are not admissible. As I said, the second question drew a connection to government decisions, so I ruled it admissible.

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POINTS OF ORDER

CORRECTION TO OFFICIAL RECORD

Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a result of an error in the transmission of information from the House yesterday, I now believe there is unanimous consent among the parties to record my vote, and I will be voting no.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to correct the record?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the same vein, I had technical difficulties yesterday. If I could also have my vote included, I will be voting yea.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from March 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-246, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (consecutive sentences for sexual offences), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:16 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-246, under Private Members' Business.

Call in the members.

● (1530)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 88)

YEAS

Members

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

Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lawton
Lefebvre	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Mahal
Majumdar	Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Mantle	Martel
Mazier	McCauley
McKenzie	McLean (Calgary Centre)
Melillo	Menegakis
Moore	Morin
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Reynolds
Richards	Roberts
Ross	Rowe
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shiplely
Simard	Small
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stevenson	Strahl
Strauss	Thériault
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Williamson
Zimmer — 157	

Private Members' Business

NAYS

Members

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

Private Members' Business

Gould	Grant
Greaves	Guay
Guilbeault	Gull-Masty
Hajdu	Hanley
Harrison	Hepfner
Hirtle	Hogan
Housefather	Hussen
Iacono	Idlout
Jaczek	Jeneroux
Johns	Joly
Joseph	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Klassen	Koutrakis
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)	Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lavack	Lavoie
LeBlanc	Leitão
Lightbound	Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Ma
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacDonald (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Maloney	May
McGuinty	McKelvie
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McKnight
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	Ménard
Mendès	Michel
Miedema	Miller
Mingarelli	Morrissey
Myles	Naqvi
Nathan	Nguyen
Noormohamed	Ntumba
Oliphant	Olszewski
O'Rourke	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Provost
Ramsay	Rana
Robertson	Rochefort
Romanado	Royer
Sahota	Saini
Sarai	Sari
Sawatzky	Schiefke
Sgro	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sodhi
Solomon	Sousa
St-Pierre	Tesser Derksen
Thompson	Turnbull
Valdez	van Koeverden
Vandenbeld	Villeneuve
Watchorn	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zerucelli
Zuberi— 169	

PAIRED

Members

Anand	Block
Bonk	Cormier
Dalton	Hodgson
Rood	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Stubbs	Sudds— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from March 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (immigration

status in sentencing), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-220, under Private Members' Business.

● (1540)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 89)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Bonin
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dancho
Davidson	Davies (Niagara South)
Dawson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	DeRidder
Deschênes	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Duncan	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genius
Gill (Calgary Skyview)	Gill (Brampton West)
Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Gill (Windsor West)
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Groleau	Guglielmin
Gunn	Hallan
Hardy	Ho
Hoback	Holman
Jackson	Jansen
Jivani	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmiec
Konanz	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kronis
Kuruc	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lawton	Lefebvre
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
Mahal	Majumdar
Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle

Private Members' Business

Martel
 McCauley
 McLean (Calgary Centre)
 Menegakis
 Morin
 Motz
 Nater
 Patzer
 Perron
 Poilievre
 Reid
 Reynolds
 Roberts
 Rowe
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schmale
 Shipley
 Small
 Ste-Marie
 Strahl
 Thériault
 Tochor
 Uppal
 Vien
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Williamson

Mazier
 McKenzie
 Melillo
 Moore
 Morrison
 Muys
 Normandin
 Paul-Hus
 Plamondon
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Richards
 Ross
 Ruff
 Scheer
 Seeback
 Simard
 Steinley
 Stevenson
 Strauss
 Thomas
 Tolmie
 Van Popta
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Zimmer— 158

NAYS

Members

Acan
 Ali
 Anandasangaree
 Baker
 Battiste
 Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)
 Bittle
 Boulerice
 Carney
 Casey
 Champagne
 Chartrand
 Chen
 Chi
 Clark
 Coteau
 Dandurand
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 Deschênes-Thériault
 Dhaliwal
 Diab
 Duguid
 Earle
 El-Khoury
 Eyolfson
 Fanjoy
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fraser
 Fuhr
 Gainey
 Gazan
 Gould
 Greaves
 Guilbeault
 Hajdu
 Harrison
 Hirtle
 Housefather
 Iacono
 Jaczek

Al Soud
 Alty
 Bains
 Bardeesy
 Beech
 Bendayan
 Blois
 Brière
 Carr
 Chagger
 Chang
 Chatel
 Chenette
 Church
 Connors
 Dabrusin
 Danko
 d'Entremont
 Desrochers
 Dhillon
 Duclos
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Erskine-Smith
 Fancy
 Fergus
 Fonseca
 Fragiskatos
 Fry
 Gaheer
 Gasparro
 Gerretsen
 Grant
 Guay
 Gull-Masty
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Hogan
 Hussien
 Idlout
 Jeneroux

Johns
 Joseph
 Kelloway
 Klassen
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
 Lattanzio
 Lavack
 LeBlanc
 Lightbound
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Maloney
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
 Ménard
 Michel
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Naqvi
 Nguyen
 Ntumba
 Olszewski
 Osborne
 Powlowski
 Ramsay
 Robertson
 Romanado
 Sahota
 Sarai
 Sawatzky
 Sgro
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Solomon
 St-Pierre
 Thompson
 Valdez
 Vandenbeld
 Watchorn
 Wilkinson
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 171

Joly
 Kayabaga
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Lalonde
 Lamoureux
 Lapointe (Sudbury)
 Lauzon
 Lavoie
 Leitão
 Long
 Ma
 MacDonald (Cardigan)
 Malette (Bay of Quinte)
 May
 McKelvie
 McKnight
 McPherson
 Mendès
 Miedema
 Mingarelli
 Myles
 Nathan
 Noormohamed
 Oliphant
 O'Rourke
 Petitpas Taylor
 Provost
 Rana
 Rochefort
 Royer
 Saini
 Sari
 Schiefke
 Sheehan
 Sodhi
 Sousa
 Tesser Derksen
 Turnbull
 van Koeverden
 Villeneuve
 Weiler
 Yip
 Zerucelli

PAIRED

Members

Anand
 Bonk
 Dalton
 Rood
 Stubbs

Block
 Cormier
 Hodgson
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Sudds— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[English]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed from March 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-243, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (parole review), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-243 under Private Members' Business.

Private Members' Business

● (1550)

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

(Division No. 90)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albas
 Anderson
 Arnold
 Baber
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Berthold
 Bezan
 Bragdon
 Brock
 Caputo
 Chong
 Cody
 Dancho
 Davies (Niagara South)
 Deltell
 Diotte
 Dowdall
 Epp
 Falk (Provencher)
 Génereux
 Gill (Calgary Skyview)
 Gill (Calgary McKnight)
 Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
 Godin
 Gourde
 Guglielmin
 Hallan
 Ho
 Holman
 Jansen
 Kelly
 Kibble
 Kmiec
 Kram
 Kronis
 Kusie
 Lantsman
 Lawton
 Leslie
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lobb
 Majumdar
 Mantle
 Mazier
 McKenzie
 Melillo
 Moore
 Morrison
 Muys
 Patzer
 Poilievre
 Reid
 Reynolds
 Roberts
 Rowe
 Scheer
 Seeback
 Small
 Stevenson
 Strauss

Aitchison
 Allison
 Anstey
 Au
 Bailey
 Barlow
 Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
 Bexte
 Borrelli
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Chambers
 Cobena
 Cooper
 Davidson
 Dawson
 DeRidder
 Doherty
 Duncan
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
 Gallant
 Genuis
 Gill (Brampton West)
 Gill (Windsor West)
 Gladu
 Goodridge
 Groleau
 Gunn
 Hardy
 Hoback
 Jackson
 Jivani
 Khanna
 Kirkland
 Konanz
 Kramp-Neuman
 Kuruc
 Lake
 Lawrence
 Lefebvre
 Lewis (Essex)
 Lloyd
 Mahal
 Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
 Martel
 McCauley
 McLean (Calgary Centre)
 Menegakis
 Morin
 Motz
 Nater
 Paul-Hus
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Richards
 Ross
 Ruff
 Schmale
 Shipley
 Steinley
 Strahl
 Thomas

Tochor
 Uppal
 Vien
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Williamson

Tolmie
 Van Popta
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Zimmer— 136

NAYS

Members

Acan
 Ali
 Anandasangaree
 Baker
 Barsalou-Duval
 Beaulieu
 Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
 Bittle
 Blanchette-Joncas
 Bonin
 Brière
 Carney
 Casey
 Champagne
 Chang
 Chatel
 Chenette
 Church
 Connors
 Dabrusin
 Danko
 DeBellefeuille
 Deschênes
 Desrochers
 Dhillon
 Duclos
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Erskine-Smith
 Fancy
 Fergus
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser
 Fuhr
 Gainey
 Gasparro
 Gazan
 Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
 Grant
 Guay
 Gull-Masty
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Hogan
 Hussen
 Idlout
 Jeneroux
 Joly
 Kayabaga
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Lalonde
 Lamoureux
 Lapointe (Sudbury)
 Lauzon
 Lavoie
 Leitão
 Lightbound
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)

Al Soud
 Alty
 Bains
 Bardeesy
 Battiste
 Beech
 Bendayan
 Blanchet
 Blois
 Boulerice
 Brunelle-Duceppe
 Carr
 Chagger
 Champoux
 Chartrand
 Chen
 Chi
 Clark
 Coteau
 Dandurand
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 d'Entremont
 Deschênes-Thériault
 Dhaliwal
 Diab
 Duguid
 Earle
 El-Khoury
 Eyolfson
 Fanjoy
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Fry
 Gaheer
 Garon
 Gaudreau
 Gerretsen
 Gould
 Greaves
 Guilbeault
 Hajdu
 Harrison
 Hirtle
 Housefather
 Iacono
 Jaczek
 Johns
 Joseph
 Kelloway
 Klassen
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
 Lattanzio
 Lavack
 LeBlanc
 Lemire
 Long
 Ma
 MacDonald (Cardigan)
 Malette (Bay of Quinte)

Private Members' Business

Maloney
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nguyen
Normandin
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Perron
Plamondon
Provost
Rana
Rocheffort
Royer
Saini
Sari
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sodhi
Sousa
St-Pierre
Thériault
Turnbull
van Koevorden
Villeneuve
Weiler
Yip
Zerucelli

May
McKelvie
McKnight
McPherson
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Noormohamed
Ntumba
Olszewski
Osborne
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sarai
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sheehan
Simard
Solomon
Ste-Marie
Tesser Derksen
Thompson
Valdez
Vandenbeld
Watchorn
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 192

PAIRED

Members

Anand
Bonk
Dalton
Rood
Stubbs

Block
Cormier
Hodgson
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sudds— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

JAIL NOT BAIL ACT

The House resumed from March 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-242, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Department of Justice Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-242 under Private Members' Business.

● (1605)

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

(Division No. 91)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Anderson
Arnold
Baber

Aitchison
Allison
Anstey
Au
Bailey

Baldinelli
Barrett
Berthold
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chong
Cody
Dancho
Davies (Niagara South)
Deltell
Diotte
Dowdall
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Généreux
Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Godin
Gourde
Guglielmin
Hallan
Ho
Holman
Jansen
Kelly
Kibble
Kmiec
Kram
Kronis
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawton
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lobb
Majumdar
Mantle
Mazier
McKenzie
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Patzer
Poilievre
Reid
Reynolds
Roberts
Rowe
Scheer
Seeback
Small
Stevenson
Strauss
Tochor
Uppal
Vien
Vis
Warkentin
Williamson

Barlow
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Bexte
Borrelli
Brassard
Calkins
Chambers
Cobena
Cooper
Davidson
Dawson
DeRidder
Doherty
Duncan
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Gallant
Genius
Gill (Brampton West)
Gill (Windsor West)
Gladu
Goodridge
Groleau
Gunn
Hardy
Hoback
Jackson
Jivani
Khanna
Kirkland
Konanz
Kramp-Neuman
Kuruc
Lake
Lawrence
Lefebvre
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
Mahal
Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Martel
McCauley
McLean (Calgary Centre)
Menegakis
Morin
Motz
Nater
Paul-Hus
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Richards
Ross
Ruff
Schmale
Shiple
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Zimmer— 136

NAYS

Members

Acan
Ali
Anandasangaree
Baker
Barsalou-Duval

Al Soud
Alty
Bains
Bardeesy
Battiste

Speaker's Ruling

Beaulieu	Beech	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)	Bendayan	Powlowski	Provost
Bittle	Blanchet	Ramsay	Rana
Blanchette-Joncas	Blois	Robertson	Rochefort
Bonin	Boulerice	Romanado	Royer
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe	Sahota	Saini
Carney	Carr	Sarai	Sari
Casey	Chagger	Savard-Tremblay	Sawatzky
Champagne	Champoux	Schiefke	Sgro
Chang	Chartrand	Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Chatel	Chen	Simard	Sodhi
Chenette	Chi	Solomon	Sousa
Church	Clark	Ste-Marie	St-Pierre
Connors	Coteau	Tesser Derksen	Thériault
Dabrusin	Dandurand	Thompson	Turnbull
Danko	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Valdez	van Koeverden
DeBellefeuille	d'Entremont	Vandenbeld	Villeneuve
Deschênes	Deschênes-Thériault	Watchorn	Weiler
Desrochers	Dhaliwal	Wilkinson	Yip
Dhillon	Diab	Zahid	Zerucelli
Duclos	Duguid	Zuberi — 193	
Dzerowicz	Earle		
Ehsassi	El-Khoury		
Erskine-Smith	Eyolfson		
Fancy	Fanjoy		
Fergus	Fisher		
Fonseca	Fortier		
Fortin	Fragiskatos		
Fraser	Fry		
Fuhr	Gaheer		
Gainey	Garon		
Gasparro	Gaudreau		
Gazan	Gerretsen		
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	Gould		
Grant	Greaves		
Guay	Guilbeault		
Gull-Masty	Hajdu		
Hanley	Harrison		
Hepfner	Hirtle		
Hogan	Housefather		
Hussen	Iacono		
Idlout	Jaczek		
Jeneroux	Johns		
Joly	Joseph		
Kayabaga	Kelloway		
Khalid	Klassen		
Koutrakis	Kwan		
Lalonde	Lambropoulos		
Lamoureux	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)		
Lapointe (Sudbury)	Larouche		
Lattanzio	Lauzon		
Lavack	Lavoie		
LeBlanc	Leitão		
Lemire	Lightbound		
Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)		
Ma	MacDonald (Malpeque)		
MacDonald (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)		
Malette (Bay of Quinte)	Maloney		
May	McGuinty		
McKelvie	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)		
McKnight	McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)		
McPherson	Ménard		
Mendès	Michel		
Miedema	Miller		
Mingarelli	Morrissey		
Myles	Naqvi		
Nathan	Nguyen		
Noormohamed	Normandin		
Ntumba	Oliphant		
Olszewski	O'Rourke		
Osborne	Perron		

PAIRED

Members

Anand	Block
Bonk	Cormier
Dalton	Hodgson
Rood	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Stubbs	Sudds — 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 47 minutes.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-8—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the point of order raised on March 23 by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader concerning amendments adopted at committee to Bill C-8, an act respecting cybersecurity, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other acts.

In his intervention, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader contended that, during clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, three amendments, CPC-2, CPC-5 and CPC-15, were adopted by the committee after having been ruled inadmissible by the chair. He argued that the three amendments were inadmissible on the grounds that they exceeded the scope of the bill as adopted by the House at second reading, and requested that the Speaker review the amendments and, if found to be out of order, that they be struck from the bill.

Speaker's Ruling

The member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, in her intervention on the matter, suggested that the Speaker should reject the arguments of the parliamentary secretary on the basis that no reasoning was offered to support that the amendments were inadmissible. She then stated that the amendments in question should not be viewed as beyond the scope of the bill because they seek to impose conditions on executive decision-making by requiring prior judicial authorization for certain orders. Citing several precedents, she contended that this type of limitation to the authority of ministers has been found to be acceptable and within the scope of bills in the past.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands also intervened briefly on the matter, questioning the validity of the point of order, suggesting that determinations about amendments are ordinarily made by the committee chair and are not subject to review by the House.

[*Translation*]

While the Speaker generally refrains from intervening in matters that fall within a committee's authority, once a bill is reported back to the House, members may challenge the procedural admissibility of amendments adopted in committee. As is explained in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, fourth edition, section 16.96:

Since a committee may appeal the decision of its Chair and reverse that decision, it may happen that a committee will report a bill with amendments that were initially ruled out of order by its Chair. The admissibility of those amendments, and of any other amendments made by a committee, may therefore be challenged on procedural grounds when the House resumes its consideration of the bill at report stage. The admissibility of the amendments is then determined by the Speaker of the House, whether in response to a point of order or on the Speaker's own initiative.

When specific amendments are brought to its attention, the Chair considers whether the committee acted beyond its authority in adopting the amendments and assesses amendments against the established rules governing their admissibility.

The member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake is quite right in pointing out the importance of providing sufficient context when raising a point of order concerning amendments in a committee report. While the Chair is obliged to review the matter once it is raised, explanations as to why the amendments fall outside the scope of the bill assist the Chair in conducting a thorough and accurate review.

In the present case, the amendments in question were initially found by the committee chair to be inadmissible on the grounds that they exceeded the scope of the bill. As explained in section 16.74 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, fourth edition:

An amendment to a bill that was referred to a committee after second reading is out of order if it is beyond the scope and principle of the bill.

• (1610)

[*English*]

The Chair has therefore carefully reviewed Bill C-8 as adopted by the House at second reading and the amendments in question to ascertain how they relate to the bill's principle and scope. The principle or main legislative objectives of the bill include strengthening Canada's national cybersecurity and providing new legal authorities to protect critical cyber systems and secure the telecommunications

sector. The amendments in question relate to part 1 of the bill, which amends the Telecommunications Act.

Whereas the bill as introduced would give the minister or Governor in Council new authority to make orders to accomplish the bill's legislative objectives, CPC-2 modifies the bill by requiring the Governor in Council or the minister to first obtain authorization from a Federal Court judge before issuing orders under sections 15.1 and 15.2 of the act. The amendment would also allow the judge to attach any conditions to the order that they consider appropriate.

The bill as introduced also provides that an order made under section 15.1 by the Governor in Council may include a provision prohibiting the disclosure of its existence or of its contents. CPC-5 amends the bill to require that the Governor in Council make an application to the Federal Court should the Governor in Council wish to prohibit the disclosure of the content of an order made under section 15.1. Where the bill would allow the Governor in Council to determine the necessity of such a prohibition, the amendment transfers the actual ability to prohibit to the Federal Court, instead of it being part of the order made by the Governor in Council.

[*Translation*]

CPC-15 effects the same transfer of authority to a Federal Court judge, but in cases where the minister is seeking to include non-disclosure provisions to orders made under section 15.2.

In the Chair's view, these amendments relate to the overall objective, broadly stated, of strengthening Canada's national cybersecurity systems. The question, therefore, is whether they exceed the scope of the bill.

While the concept of judicial oversight appears in the bill, its purpose is to review decisions already taken by the Governor in Council. The three amendments instead transfer the authority to make certain orders, or to prohibit the disclosure of the content of certain orders, from the executive branch to the Federal Court. In doing so, they confer new powers on the judicial branch that were not contemplated in the bill as adopted at second reading.

Routine Proceedings

The Chair finds there to be important distinctions between this case and the precedents raised by the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. In the case cited from 2006, the amendment in question did not affect the Minister's power to act; rather it introduced a power to appeal after the fact. In the more recent example relating to Bill C-483, the amendments to the bill maintained the role for the National Parole Board already conceived of in the legislation, but in a more limited form than was originally proposed. Both of these cases can accurately be viewed as a constraint on decision-making authority already found in each bill. In the current case, the Chair views the amendments as going beyond the imposition of a condition on the exercise of authority by the minister or Governor in Council, transforming what were ministerial powers into judicial powers instead.

[*English*]

Consequently, the amendments proposed appear to the Chair to contain new concepts that are beyond the scope of the bill and lead the Chair to conclude that the amendments were correctly ruled inadmissible by the chair of the committee.

Therefore, I order that the aforementioned amendments, CPC-2, CPC-5 and CPC-15, be declared null and void and no longer form part of the bill as reported to the House. Furthermore, I am ordering a reprint of Bill C-8 with the removal of the inadmissible amendments. This reprinted version will stand as the official version of the bill for consideration at report stage.

I thank all members for their attention.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1615)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 10 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Health.

[*English*]

The report concerns Bill C-234, an act respecting the establishment and award of a living donor recognition medal. The committee studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

I also have the honour to present in both official languages the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Health entitled “Sup-

plementary Estimates (C), 2025-26: Vote 5c under Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Vote 10c under Department of Health, Votes 1c and 10c under Public Health Agency of Canada”.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

SHORELINE EROSION

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hereby table petition e-6836, which has been duly certified by the clerk of petitions.

The petition, signed by 810 people, responds to the House of Commons vote on October 8, 2024, in support of the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “Reducing the Impact of Commercial Shipping on Shoreline Erosion in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Corridor”, which was tabled during the 44th Parliament.

Despite a unanimous vote in the House of Commons, the government has still not implemented the recommendations contained in this report. The petitioners place particular emphasis on the first recommendation: “That the Government of Canada re-establish a shoreline protection program...where erosion is due in large part to shipping, in particular where the channel is narrow and more exposed to wake...”. This is a major issue in my riding, particularly in the municipalities of Varennes, Verchères and Contrecoeur.

The petitioners therefore call on the government to take appropriate measures to address this issue and to establish a relationship of trust and collaboration between the federal government, users of the seaway and shoreline communities.

[*English*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petition e-6951 on behalf of 1,786 Canadians, including children of the veterans buried in the Last Post Fund's National Field of Honour, plus other descendants of Canada's war veterans and friends of the cemetery.

Petitioners highlight the national significance of the historic military cemetery, Canada's largest, located in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, and express concern over the ongoing financial challenges faced by the not-for-profit Last Post Fund, which is responsible for its maintenance. They call on the Government of Canada to honour and implement the “Canada Strong” campaign commitment to assume ownership of the cemetery, to direct Veterans Affairs and Canadian Heritage to develop a clear action plan with the Last Post Fund and a timeline for its transfer to the Crown, like all of our other military cemeteries, and to announce the plan by November 11, 2026, as a tribute to the service and sacrifice of all our veterans.

• (1620)

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today, again, on Bill C-9. I may sound like a broken record here, but some truths just bear repeating.

Petitioners in my community are calling on the government to reverse course and not remove long-standing protections from the Criminal Code that protect people of faith, Canadians of faith, reading sacred texts like the Bible, the Torah and the Quran. The proposal by the Liberals and the Bloc would subject those Canadians to potential criminal prosecution for the simple fact of believing in a faith and expressing that belief publicly. Therefore, residents in my riding are calling on the government to withdraw this proposal and, secondly, to protect and promote religious freedom in Canada.

TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY

Gaétan Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting a petition that will be circulated throughout northern Ontario, calling for Trans-Canada Highway 11 to be designated as a critical project of national interest to support the economic stability and security of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

I present this petition on behalf of Canadians living along Trans-Canada Highway 11 in order to designate it as a project of national interest and ensure the highway's safety and reliability for all Canadians.

[*English*]

FARMLAND IN CLEARVIEW TOWNSHIP

Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Simcoe—Grey to present a petition.

People in Clearview Township were shocked and surprised when the Department of National Defence bought a farm of 750 acres from one farmer and proposed an over-the-horizon radar system. We are very supportive of our military, as Canadian Forces Base Borden is within our border. The concern is that the department needs another 2,600 acres, and people are extremely worried that the government, if needed for phase two, will expropriate those lands.

No one is interested in selling, so the petitioners are asking that the government stop the building of the over-the-horizon site on the already purchased property, prevent future acquisition of prime farmland for the building of the over-the-horizon site on the prime farmland in Clearview Township, and preferably register the previously purchased property with the Ontario Farmland Trust to preserve its agricultural status. We are definitely opposed to expropriation of these properties.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today regarding Bill C-9. Canadians are concerned that Liberal-Bloc amendments to Bill C-9 could be used to criminalize passages from the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and other sacred texts.

Routine Proceedings

The state has no place in religious texts or teachings of any faith community. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion are fundamental rights that must be preserved. Therefore, the petitioners call on the Liberal Government of Canada to protect religious freedom, to uphold the right to read and share sacred texts, and to prevent government overreach into matters of faith.

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of London—Fanshawe and also on behalf of my fellow Canadians with concerns about Bill C-9. The concern is that Bill C-9 could be used to criminalize passages from religious texts, including the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and other sacred texts. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion are fundamental rights that must be preserved.

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also bring forward a petition addressing Bill C-9, which will be voted on later today.

The petitioning Canadian citizens wish to bring to the attention of the government the fact that the Liberals have proposed removing from the Criminal Code safeguards that protect good-faith expressions of sincerely held religious beliefs, including those based on religious texts like the Bible, the Quran or the Torah.

Canadians share the Liberals' desire to combat acts that propagate and normalize hate, but the proposal would not achieve that goal and would instead result in the persecution of people who hold and express in good faith sincerely held religious beliefs. Violence and threats are by definition excluded from the scope of that protection for freedom of expression and could never be expressed in good faith. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion are fundamental freedoms worthy of protection and promotion, not persecution.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the government to withdraw this proposal and oppose any similar proposals in the future, and to protect and promote the religious freedoms of all Canadians, uphold their right to read and share sacred texts, and prevent government overreach into all matters of faith.

• (1625)

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition regarding Bill C-9. The Canadians who have signed this petition want to remind the government that it has no authority over sacred texts or teachings of any faith community. That boundary is not negotiable. Bill C-9 would overstep the boundary, stripping away long-standing protections that have allowed Canadians to speak and live their faith in good faith.

Routine Proceedings

This is what the petitioners have said. Canadians are concerned that Liberal-Bloc amendments to Bill C-9 could be used to criminalize passages from the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and other texts. The state has no place in the religious texts or teachings of any faith community. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion are fundamental rights that must be preserved. Therefore, the petitioners call on the Liberal Government of Canada to protect religious freedom, to uphold the right to read and share sacred texts, and to prevent government overreach into matters of faith.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, dozens of constituents from the riding of Waterloo have signed the petition I am presenting, and many of these applicants have lived in Canada for several years, maintaining lawful status, contributing to the economy and the research sector, and repeatedly passing previous security verifications. Many of these constituents are actually Iranian nationals holding Canadian masters degrees and Ph.D.s.

The petitioners are raising to the Government of Canada that they feel and believe that the security screening process is disproportionately unfair for people who come from certain parts of the world, so they would like to bring this matter to the government's attention.

The petitioners make the point that they have been here for an extended period of time, sometimes even 10 to 15 years, before they are invited to apply for the provincial nominee program to have permanent residence. They would like the Government of Canada to look into this process and the scrutiny under the security process. They want Canada to be safe, but they also want to have a fair chance to be able to establish themselves and to continue contributing to the Canadian economy as Canadian citizens.

NORTHERN RESIDENTS DEDUCTION

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Grand Cache, in my wonderful riding of Yellowhead.

People are calling on the government to do one thing: restore fairness to the community. It is a remote and isolated town where everything costs more. While these are exactly the kinds of challenges the northern residents deduction is meant to address, a line on the map that was drawn by a bureaucrat in Ottawa has excluded Grand Cache from the program. My constituents are simply asking for fair treatment. If Grand Cache were reclassified, a typical family with children would save about \$1,200, which should be left in its pocket. Exceptions have been made in the past for other remote communities, including, recently, Haida Gwaii in British Columbia.

The petitioners therefore call on the government to include Grand Cache in the northern residents deduction program. I support their call and will continue to advocate on their behalf in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Before I continue with Routine Proceedings, this is just a reminder to members that typically when we are tabling petitions, they are all supposed to be done together. It is not the normal practice to go back to a member who has already tabled a petition.

Kelly DeRidder: Mr. Speaker, I am asking for grace to table a petition. I did not do it in my first standing, but I do have another one today.

The Deputy Speaker: Do I have unanimous consent from the chamber in order that the member may table the petition?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

FALUN GONG

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition submitted by Canadians and by residents of Kitchener Centre who are deeply concerned about the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in Canada and China. They are calling on the Government of Canada to take these concerns seriously and to stand firm in the defence of human rights and the safety of Canadians.

I want to thank the members of the Falun Gong community for bringing this forward. I will continue to advocate for the protection of fundamental freedoms, accountability and the safety of all Canadians. I am honoured to table this petition today.

* * *

● (1630)

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 840, 841, 842, 843, 844 and 845 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[For text of questions and responses, see *Written Questions website*]

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: 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 Courtenay—Alberni, Health; the hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, Public Safety; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, International Trade.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

COMBATTING HATE ACT

Hon. Jill McKnight (for the Minister of Justice) moved that Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places), be read the third time and passed.

[English]

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to share my time with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Emergency Management.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure and honour for me to rise as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to speak about and be in strong support of the government's combatting hate bill, strong and decisive measures in Bill C-9 that would protect Canadians from hate, intimidation and violence, while fully respecting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which makes our beautiful country a beacon of democracy and inclusion.

The bill is very measured, targeted legislation. It would address some gaps in the Criminal Code that leave communities vulnerable to harassment and threats simply because of who they are, how they worship or the spaces they gather in.

Let me share the perspective of those on the front lines. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which sees these actions first-hand, said the following: "FCM welcomes federal efforts to strengthen Canada's legislative framework to protect communities from hate, including hate speech and symbols. Local leaders see first-hand how they can threaten safety, trust and community well-being."

Our party platform, at page 19, made it crystal clear, a clear commitment to Canadians during the last elections, that we promised to criminalize intimidation and obstruction targeting people who simply want to access their community centres and places of worship. We promised to strengthen protections for communities facing hate-motivated crimes.

I will remind the House that Canadians, including the very brave people in the riding of Carleton, made their choice clear at the ballot box and want the House to implement the commitments made in the election platform. That is exactly what Bill C-9 would do. Voting against the bill would literally be voting against the very same things that Canadians voted for on April 28, 2025.

Here is what Bill C-9 would actually do. The bill would protect access to community spaces and religious buildings. It would create offences for obstructing access to buildings used primarily for religious worship or by identifiable groups, including schools, community centres, seniors residences and cultural spaces. It would also criminalize behaviour intended to intimidate individuals trying to access these very same spaces. This would ensure that Canadians

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can attend religious services, drop their children off at school or participate in community activities without fear.

The bill would create a new stand-alone hate crime offence. Whether it is assault, mischief or other criminal conduct, if it is motivated by hatred towards a protected group based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or other characteristics, law enforcement and courts would now have the tools to treat this hate as an integral part of the crime itself. This is about clarity, consistency and justice for victims.

The bill would also codify the Supreme Court's definition of hatred to ensure that hate-motivated conduct is addressed decisively, while at the same time ensuring that the mere criticism, offence or disagreement is not criminalized. It would require showing proof of an emotion of an intense and extreme nature clearly associated with vilification and detestation.

Finally, the bill would criminalize the wilful public display of symbols associated with hate or terrorist entities, such as the Nazi *hakenkreuz*. The intent to promote hatred would have to be present, meaning that the mere display alone would not be a crime. This would modernize the law and protect communities from intimidation, while fully respecting freedom of expression.

The need for this legislation was once unanimously recognized by the House. Many elements of the bill originate from the 2024 justice committee report on fighting anti-Semitism that Conservatives supported at the time. They believed in codifying the definition of hatred. They believed in establishing a stand-alone hate crime offence, and they once believed in safeguarding access to religious and community spaces, yet today, in 2026, the same Conservative Party has turned its back on these very same issues.

The Conservatives are clearly divided and inconsistent on the issue. That is why Quebec Conservative members are not standing up to speak to the legislation. They support it, but their leader is barring them from speaking. That is why no progressive Conservative members on that side of the House have spoken out on the bill. They are being told not to.

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• (1635)

Who actually emerged as the Conservative champion on the opposition to Bill C-9? It is not their shadow justice minister. It is actually the member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South. It is the member who previously dismissed the Polytechnique massacre as a “fake holiday”. It is the same member who defended Holocaust deniers on the radio by suggesting that denying the Holocaust is just free speech. It is still the same member who stood up for PEGIDA, a white supremacist organization, following the 2017 Quebec City mosque attack that left six innocent men dead. They were fathers, sons and husbands who were murdered while praying. This is the level of moral bankruptcy guiding the Conservative opposition. It speaks volumes.

Statistics Canada reports 4,777 incidents in 2023, which is a 32% increase from 2022. Religion-based hate rose 67%, while sexual orientation-based hate rose 69% and race or ethnically-based hate continues to grow. These numbers represent real Canadians living under real threat. They are parents, seniors, students and community members targeted simply for who they are.

Conservatives do not want to acknowledge that hate crimes are real. They do not want to protect the most vulnerable communities. It is completely shameful.

I have the privilege of sitting at the justice committee where government members worked constructively with opposition and stakeholders to strengthen protection and clarify the law where it is needed. A “for greater certainty” clause was added to explicitly state that religious speech and practice is not captured by the legislation before us. The definition of hatred was even amended to include the word “extreme”, ensuring alignment with the Supreme Court rulings.

Despite these careful measures, the Conservative Party continues to mislead Canadians. Its members have tried to frame this bill as an attack on religion, claiming that preaching or teaching scripture could be criminalized. That is categorically false. Courts have long held that four existing hate propaganda offences require proof of wilful intent to target an identifiable group, which is a very high legal threshold that peaceful religious expression has never met and never will under this bill.

Instead of supporting practical protections for Canadians, Conservative members have resorted to filibusters, procedural delays, fearmongering and misinformation to block the bill's process. It is politics over people and partisan games over the safety of Canadians who face harassment and intimidation simply for living their lives.

The evidence is clear. Religious communities, LGBTQ Canadians and racialized groups have faced dramatic increases in hate crimes. Police and municipalities report that they lack sufficient tools to respond effectively under the Criminal Code. The bill before us would fix that.

This is a moment for action, not delay. The Conservative Party has the choice to continue spreading fear and misinformation or to stand with Canadians who deserve to live, worship and gather in safety.

We are a government that acts decisively. This bill denounces hate and would protect communities and strengthen the law. It would do so while fully respecting the freedom of religion, freedom of speech and expression, the right to protest, and while giving law enforcement the clarity and the tools they need to protect Canadians.

It is time to put partisanship aside and support the proposed combatting hate act. It is time to reject fearmongering and misinformation. It is time to stand with Canadians who deserve to live, worship and gather safely.

Our communities are counting on us. Let us act. Let us pass the combatting hate act.

• (1640)

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the parliamentary secretary has been working on this very closely on the justice committee. However, we heard the Minister of Identity and Culture say that the Bible and certain books of the Torah contain categorical hatred and that there should be discretion for prosecutors to press charges. I would ask her very simply whether she agrees with the minister or not.

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, I would say right off the bat that it is not what the Minister of Identity and Culture said.

That being said, this bill is very important. Nothing in the bill says that, if the Bible is quoted and it is not done with the wilful intent to impute hatred on an identifiable group, then it would be captured. That individual or that group of people would not be captured.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The parliamentary secretary may not recall them, but I actually have the minister's comments.

Can I get unanimous consent to table them?

The Deputy Speaker: Does the member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: We will continue with questions and comments. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary could provide her thoughts on the damage that is caused when we have the official opposition spreading misinformation to the degree they have on Bill C-9. I think of the individuals who attend our gurdwaras, mosques, temples and so forth. The impact, I would suggest, is that it creates fear and does more damage than good.

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I wonder if the member could provide her thoughts on that issue.

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, it is a very important question because there has been a lot of fearmongering and misinformation being put out by the Conservative Party, and Canadians have responded in emails. They are fretting, asking about what is contained in Bill C-9. Bill C-9 is there to protect Canadians.

As for the rise in hate, I have enumerated stats from Stats Canada, and there are very serious percentages of hate that are rising in our daily lives. Bill C-9 would come in and protect Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House that the offence of promoting hatred involves publicly communicating with the wilful intent to target a group. I would like to hear my honourable colleague's thoughts on that.

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, in fact, that is precisely what is addressed in the bill we will have the opportunity to vote on this evening. I hope this bill will pass unanimously, as its sole purpose is to protect Canadians so that they feel safe. A very specific provision has been included in Bill C-9 to make it clear that a person who recites the Bible or the Torah in the proper manner and in good faith will not be penalized.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a political exercise for a party that does retail politics very well. We know what this is aiming for. This bill would not make anything safe. It would not help anything.

Is it better for the government to enforce the legislation we have on the books when it comes to protecting people rather than doing what it is doing to divide people further?

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, I think the colleague should revert to his party and see within his ranks because therein lies the division on this bill, which is only coming in to be able to protect Canadians. On this side of the House, we are all united and we are all for the adoption of protecting the people and individuals who are subject to hate every day. On this side of the House, we are unanimous. The division lies on the other side, unfortunately.

Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been asking for this bill for two years. This is a bill I feel passionately about, and it is a bill that is desperately needed.

In the last month, three synagogues in Toronto were shot at. Jewish institutions were shot at in Belgium and Holland. A synagogue in Detroit was attacked with a car by a guy who was armed. He rammed into the gate. Over and over in this world, we have seen acts of hate directed at many communities, but in particular right now, it is directed at the Jewish community.

In the last year, Jews were killed in Washington, D.C., because they were Jewish, killed in Colorado because they were Jewish, killed in Manchester in the U.K. because they were Jewish, and

killed at Bondi Beach in December because they were Jewish and celebrating Hanukkah.

One of the ideas in this bill is something that I started promoting two years ago based off an incident in my riding. During this incident, demonstrators surrounded the Federation CJA and Jewish buildings in Montreal that house the Jewish Public Library and the Montreal Holocaust Museum. For a period of three hours, people were blocked from entering the building to go hear a speaker and from leaving the building after work, all while the Montreal police sat there and did not arrest one person. They did not arrest one person for blocking the Jewish community buildings, including the Jewish Public Library and the Holocaust museum, for hours.

Later that week, the same thing was done outside of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, yet again nobody was arrested. When I talked to the police about it, they said that it was not really that clear that intimidating and obstructing people from entering or leaving a building was a criminal offence. It was not one they felt comfortable charging.

What we then said was that we needed a specific offence for this. We needed a specific intimidation offence, an obstruction offence, to make sure people have the right to enter or leave their churches, synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras, places of worship, schools, community centres, seniors homes or LGBT centres. This is included in the bill.

This bill would afford people special protection in the event that they are part of a group in Canada seeking to worship. It would allow people to know that they can enter or leave a space without protesters yelling hateful slogans, carrying terrorist symbols or screaming and yelling at them. To me, that is the core of this legislation.

There are many parts to the legislation, and all of them, as my colleague the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice said, were recommended by the justice committee. When we did our study on anti-Semitism in 2024, a study that I moved, we came up with different recommendations. Some were for the federal government, some for the provincial governments, some for municipal governments, some for colleges and universities and some for the police. There are many jurisdictions involved in stopping hate in this country.

Those recommendations included a stand-alone offence for hate, an intimidation or obstruction offence to stop people from blocking people's access to community buildings and something to deal with terrorist symbols and hate symbols to make it harder for people to go out in public, yelling and screaming chants and holding terrorist symbols, such as the symbol of Hamas or Hezbollah, in these demonstrations. These were all recommendations made by the committee, and when we look at the Conservative Party's dissent in the report, it did not dissent on any of those four issues at all.

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• (1650)

We also tried in this bill to deal with and accommodate concerns that had been expressed. There were concerns, including from me, related to the way hate was defined and the fact that it did not completely reflect what Keegstra said. We went back and used an amendment that reflected the wording of Keegstra, requiring extreme detestation or vilification to rise to the level of wilfully promoting hate.

While I felt the consent of the provincial attorney general should not be needed for public prosecutions, and I personally advocated for amending the bill to say only that attorney general consent was required for private prosecutions, I listened to my colleagues who had concerns about the attorney general not being needed for public prosecutions. So did my other colleagues from the Liberal Party, including the parliamentary secretary for justice. We voted to remove the part of the bill, as recommended in the anti-Semitism report of the justice committee, that would have removed attorney general consent. We put it back. The attorney general consent is there.

We tried our best, I think, to accommodate the many reasonable comments we got from everyone.

There are two arguments that I hear on this bill, particularly from my Conservative colleagues. The first relates to enforcement. It is the idea that we do not need a new bill. We just need to enforce existing laws. One of the things about enforcing existing laws is that provinces enforce the Criminal Code. In 90-some per cent of cases, it is provincial authorities and the people on the ground who make the decisions on arrests, working with their local prosecutors, which are usually provincial, and the local police. The federal government, and even the Prime Minister, cannot tell the Toronto or Montreal police they have to arrest Mr. X or Mrs. Y. They cannot even do what the attorney general of the province can do, which is provide clear instructions as to when the charge should be laid in a provincial matter.

The idea that we should not do this because it should just be enforced means that we, as a federal Parliament that can rewrite the Criminal Code, should do nothing. We can say our fancy words and say we are very upset that the police are not arresting people, but we would be doing nothing. Why on earth would we do nothing when we could add the specific offences police have asked for and said would make it easier for them to prosecute the people we want them to prosecute, who are committing hate offences?

The idea that there is already an intimidation and obstruction offence protecting these specific buildings is not true. There is no stand-alone hate offence in the Criminal Code right now. This bill would add measures. That is why it is important.

The other argument relates to the removal of the defence for wilful promotion of hatred. The argument is that it is somehow going to mean one thing because one member said one thing at one committee meeting that is now being extrapolated.

For someone to be charged with extreme detestation or vilification, they would have to be someone the police arrested and the prosecutor wanted to charge because they were promoting hate wilfully, and that rises to a level of extreme detestation or vilification. It would have to be something that is wilful. The person must

knowingly and intentionally want to promote hatred, and that would apply to somebody reading the Torah, the Quran, the Bible or any religious text. It is absolutely asinine. It makes no sense that the person arrested by the police and charged by the prosecutor, agreed to by the provincial attorney general, would be somebody who was benignly reading or preaching a religious text. Everyone here knows that is not true.

When we scare people and pretend something is true, of course they are going to react, sign petitions and call, but it is not true.

I am someone who has always fought against the use of the notwithstanding clause. I opposed it with respect to taking away religious rights in my own province, and I even held rallies for religious freedom, so the idea that I would support something that would do that is ridiculous.

This bill is important. I encourage all of us to adopt it.

• (1655)

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

Even though my colleague and I are from different parties, we have often found ourselves in agreement on a number of issues. We worked on the justice committee together.

I really want to address something he was speaking about at the end. I have two points to make, and I would love an on-point response or rebuttal from him.

The first point is that he spoke about the promotion of hatred and what one of his colleagues said, who is now a cabinet colleague. When I see somebody saying something like reading from the Torah is hateful and then that person gets promoted to cabinet, that is a bit of a problem. The second point is that when the Liberals go along with a Bloc amendment talking about protecting religious people who speak and protecting their freedom of expression, that becomes an issue.

Those are the concerns, not what he said. Those are all laudable concerns.

How would he respond to that?

Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I extend the same appreciation to my colleague, whom I often work with and very much enjoy working with.

The member asked about two things. First, I have called for the repeal of the religious-based defence since early 2024, when CIJA called for it, and I agreed with them, following what happened with Charkaoui in Montreal. I have supported removing that for two years. It has never successfully been used in Canadian history. The fear is that it deters prosecutors from pursuing a case against somebody who clearly and wilfully promotes hate in the street.

Second, as the hon. member knows, hateful speech is not hate speech. There are a lot of things in this country that are hateful but do not rise to the level of prosecuting them under the Criminal Code for the wilful promotion of hatred, which rises to the level of detestation and vilification.

While I may disagree with what my hon. colleague said, he never said that somehow, people would be prosecuted as a result of doing what he said they—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Shefford.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand how it is acceptable, in a secular society like Quebec, to argue that someone should not be criminally prosecuted under a religious exemption even if there is a hateful intent behind it all. That is unacceptable. Quebec has chosen secularism. It is unacceptable, but that is our current reality. This is not misinformation. The Criminal Code allows someone to defend themselves by invoking the religious exemption. It is absurd.

Does my colleague truly fear that, if he decides to read excerpts from his holy book or even display a symbol of his religion without any threat of violence toward anyone, Bill C-9 will infringe upon his freedom of expression?

Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, of course the answer is no. It is clear that people could read any sacred text, pray to it, or do anything else, and no one would be charged for reading a sacred text. The issue here is the promotion of hatred, that is, deliberately wanting someone to be slandered. The idea that this would happen simply because a person goes to church and reads the Bible there makes no sense. It is not fair. It is not true.

● (1700)

[*English*]

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my dad grew up in my hon. colleague's riding. I thank the member for being a tireless defender and an advocate for action on anti-Semitism.

It is shocking to me that in a city like Guelph, members of the Jewish community are worried about their safety. They are looking for leadership. They are looking to us to do something.

I ask my colleague, with regard to the protection of access to community centres and synagogues, to outline how this would also apply to other places of worship. Why are we responding in this moment? How would it apply more broadly to protect people and their faith?

Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I want to say is that this bill, when we talk about anti-Semitism, is something that has been asked for by all of the main Jewish organizations in

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Canada, including CIJA, B'nai Brith and the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center. I can go on and on about the Jewish organizations that support the bill and have asked for the bill.

They want to see actual action, not just words. This bill is action. This would change the law to make sure that not only the Jewish community is protected, but that other faith groups and other minority groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community, are protected.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to share my time with my hon. colleague from Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, when I came to this House, I made a commitment to work to make Canada a freer place. I wish it were not the case, but today I have to make good on that pledge. I will be voting against Bill C-9. This is not a surprise to people who have been following the discussions we have been having over the last few months.

Instead of focusing on the fact that we are not complying with what the Liberals want us to do, I will focus on the fact that they have not actually been engaging with the “why”. It is not just the Conservatives, but so many Canadians, including different parties in this House, who are opposed to what they are doing. It is because they see through it. Canadians know legislation will not protect people of faith or any Canadian from hate when it exposes them to prosecution for expressing good-faith religious beliefs, and even political beliefs as well. All Canadians, and certainly all members of Parliament, must know what is at stake today under the guise of combatting hate, which is a very real problem in this country.

I have spoken about the murder of the Afzaal family in London. This family was killed because of their Muslim faith. I have spoken about the rise in anti-Semitism in Canada. These are egregious, despicable things that happen every day because of laws that are not enforced. I have spoken about the hate facing Christians, Sikhs and Hindus. Hate is real, but it will not be combatted with legislation that goes after sincerely held religious beliefs, that stifles debate, that silences dissent and that criminalizes expression and, yes, potentially even the citation of religious texts.

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I will go back to the most important part. Bill C-9 was deeply flawed and very concerning when it went to the justice committee. It was downright dangerous when it came out. With no witness testimony, no consultation and no meaningful intervention by any of the Liberal members of the committee, the Liberal and Bloc Québécois members teamed up to remove a decades-old protection for religious speech called the religious defence. It was actually something Pierre Trudeau's government put in place. Back then, the Liberals understood the importance of freedom of expression and religious freedom.

I would say even Liberal MPs see the danger of Bill C-9. I would like to quote the Liberal member of Parliament for Nunavut, who said, "This bill seems to be more about criminalizing people who speak out than it is about addressing the growing racism against racialized people." She also said, "the bill has the potential to criminalize peaceful protesters and legitimate dissent." That is quite interesting, because the member for Nunavut voted in favour of the report stage of Bill C-9 just a couple of days ago.

The Liberals have even stifled dissent within their own ranks on this bill, just as they have censored debate and dialogue in this House, limiting our discussion at third reading to just a couple of hours of debate on a Wednesday afternoon. We do not have not one full day, but one half day of debate.

I had the great privilege yesterday, alongside dozens of members of Parliament from different parties, of attending the National Prayer Breakfast in Ottawa. This was my first time doing so as a member of Parliament, and my first time attending it all. The Leader of the Opposition was there. He spoke very eloquently about the role of faith in Canadian society. I was grateful to see even the Prime Minister there, yet one day after standing with nearly 2,000 people of faith from across the country, the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party are putting forward legislation and passing it through the very final stage of the process in the House of Commons that will erode long-standing protections for religious speech.

One thing that is so important to stress is how faith unites Canadians. I am not talking about one religion. I am not talking about one denomination. Over the course of the last few months, I have been doing the consultations the Liberal government never did with faith communities affected by this. I spoke to imams, rabbis, pastors, priests, civil society activists and lawyers who specialize in the Constitution. I have spoken to so many people. One thing that was so apparent as I spoke to faith leaders was how people of faith have so much more in common with each other in terms of what they value.

There is a joke I have shared a couple of times. I hope the Speaker will forgive me for repeating material. I have not shared it in this chamber before. If I had 20 faith leaders, between them I could probably find 25 different opinions on theology, because people of faith have differences on what scripture means and what we are commanded to do in this sense or in that.

• (1705)

If the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals were truly serious about secularism, religious freedom would mean that people of faith have the freedom, without state intervention, to have those discussions

and debates. That is why people of faith have united against Bill C-9.

There has been a declaration circulating among Christian churches and groups. As of today, I believe 800 Christian organizations, representing nearly one million people, have signed on, opposing Bill C-9. Just this week, 89 Quebec civil society organizations signed a letter. Again, the Bloc Québécois tries to tell us that there is consensus on this, but even in Quebec that is not true. Two weeks ago, there were 350 Muslim organizations. There were dozens of orthodox Jewish rabbis from the Rabbinical Council of Toronto. The entire Abrahamic faith community understands that Bill C-9 would not protect them if it is jeopardizing their religious beliefs.

We prepared to accept it. We understood that the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois had made their deal. We knew the bill was going to pass. We wanted to minimize the harm as much as possible. The Liberals rejected every single effort to do so. They rejected our offer to set aside the divisive bill so that real consultation could take place, and instead focus on other justice priorities. They said no. We offered up stakeholder concerns made in good faith for the Liberals to incorporate. They ignored it. We offered for language affirming charter freedoms to be put in the bill. They rejected it. We offered to split the bill and speedily pass the things that no one takes issue with. They said no.

The Liberals have said no to people of faith. They have effectively accused people of faith of being so dumb that they cannot understand for themselves what is happening. They are saying that they know better than all of the organizations and all of the people who have been calling and emailing our offices, engaging in good faith with the government on this, or trying to anyway. They are saying that they know better. This is something that is so deeply offensive, not just to people of faith but to all Canadians who value freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

We have heard comments about how this defence should not exist, because it is not necessary because of the charter. Then, we also hear the contradictory argument that the religious defence should not exist, because it is unfair and gives people of faith an unfair advantage in law, so those who are pushing Bill C-9 in its current form are saying two opposing things: that Bill C-9, in removing the religious defence, would do nothing, so we do not need to worry about it, and that it would do something that is so important that we cannot choose not to do it. In the months of discussion about this, no one in the Liberal Party has been able to answer that. Even today, I have no idea whether the Minister of Justice will truly defend the removal of the religious defence, or if his parliamentary secretary will, because they have not wanted to so far. Therefore, we are calling on the Liberals, once and for all, to do the right thing.

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However, I want to tell the Canadians who have been speaking out that they have been heard. Their voices have been heard and are so important, and while we will fight to ensure this bill does not become law, if we are not successful we will not give up. I will not give up. I will always stand for religious freedom. I will always stand for freedom of expression. I will always commit to repealing any Liberal censorship law in whatever form it comes, now and forever.

● (1710)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too will stand up for religious freedom. I do that all the time. I am going to be voting in favour of the legislation, because the Charter of Rights guarantees every Canadian the right to freedom of religion. It is in our Constitution. There is nothing happening that would take away the religious rights of individual Canadians that is not there today. There is a great deal of misinformation being circulated to create what I would suggest is a false fear.

Can the member opposite provide his thoughts on the Charter of Rights? Does he believe in Canada's Charter of Rights?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have an illustration of what I mentioned in my speech. This is the Liberals doing the “It does not do anything, therefore there is no point in opposing it” argument, to which I would ask, “Then what is the harm in leaving it in?”

I absolutely believe in the rights enumerated in our charter. I only wish the Liberal government had the same view. If it did, it would not be appealing the Emergencies Act decision to the Supreme Court after two courts have said the government violated the charter rights of Canadians despite pretending that it was never going to happen and could never happen. The Liberals made the same arguments when they invoked the Emergencies Act, that the charter would protect people from bad laws, and here we are. They are saying the same things about Bill C-9.

[Translation]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, freedom of expression and freedom of religion are fundamental rights. However, we have collectively agreed that freedom of expression cannot extend to the offence of promoting hatred. These are not trivial matters, differences of opinion or insults. Promoting hatred is no trivial matter.

The issue here is eliminating the religious exemption in the Criminal Code for this offence. That means that we continue to guarantee freedom of expression and freedom of religion, but not to the extent of promoting hatred.

I would remind the House that, in October 2024, the preacher Adil Charkaoui called for the death of Jews in his prayer at a protest in Montreal. Quebec's director of criminal and penal prosecutions determined that he could not prosecute him. That is why this change is being made. We support freedom of expression and religion, but not to the extent of allowing the offence of promoting hatred.

Does my hon. colleague believe that the preacher Adil Charkaoui had a right to call for the death of Jews in his street prayers?

[English]

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question from the Bloc members so many times. I wish they would listen to my response. The case of Adil Charkaoui was a failing in political leadership and prosecutorial discretion. The religious defence was never cited by prosecutors as being a rationale for not charging Charkaoui, and more importantly, the religious defence does not apply to any Criminal Code offences dealing with violence, threats to violence or calls to genocide.

I think the political leadership problem is at issue here and in many of the other cases involving brazen anti-Semitism, but the religious defence applies only to good-faith expression. As such, when we remove it, we are only removing protections for people making religious expressions in good faith.

● (1715)

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the hard work he has done on this. I know the folks in my riding of Ponoka—Didsbury certainly appreciate his efforts and the efforts of the Conservative team.

We heard a little while ago from the member for Mount Royal, who cited a whole bunch of examples of why this piece of legislation is needed, yet when we look at the Criminal Code, section 264 deals with harassment where people fear for their safety in their communities; mischief is section 430, which deals with interference with people's lawful enjoyment of property; intimidation is section 423, which deals with obstruction, coercion or making people feel fearful. Plus, there are the hate speech provisions that we already know about in the Criminal Code.

As such, do any of the arguments that the Liberals are using to pass Bill C-9 hold water at all?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that is no. I would actually point out that the member for Mount Royal was urged by former Liberal member of Parliament Irwin Cotler to consider leaving the Liberal Party because of anti-Semitism in the Liberal Party. If he wants to talk about inaction, he needs to look around at his colleagues. The Liberal government has no moral high ground to be the arbiters of hate, and let us face it: Canadians do not trust it to draw a line that would not be used to silence dissent.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the second time this week to speak to Bill C-9, after the Liberals rammed it through committee and this House and are censoring debate on their own censorship bill. At third reading, we are no longer deliberating intentions. We are deciding consequences. The consequence of Bill C-9, as it now stands, is clear: a fundamental change to Canada's Criminal Code that the Liberals have never been able to properly justify, even today.

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Let us be clear at the outset: Conservatives believe that hate is real. We believe that Canadians of every faith deserve to be safe in their communities and free from intimidation, violence and harassment. However, what we are dealing with today is not simply a bill about protecting communities. It is a bill that has been altered mid-debate in a way that raises serious legal, constitutional and moral concerns, and we have a government that still refuses to explain why.

The central issue before the House is the removal of the religious defence from section 319 of the Criminal Code, a protection that has existed for 56 years. The government did not campaign on removing it, nor was it in the original bill or even introduced after broad consultation. It appeared late in the process through an amendment supported by the Liberals and the Bloc, and since that moment, Canadians have been asking one simple question: Why?

To this day, not one member of the Liberal Party has been able to give a clear answer. What we have heard instead are shifting justifications, vague references, and an inability to articulate why a long-standing defence, one that has formed part of the legal balance in Canada's hate speech laws since 1970, should suddenly be removed.

Meanwhile, outside this chamber, Canadians have been speaking, and they have been speaking so loudly. Civil liberties organizations, legal experts and faith communities across this country have all raised concerns. We are not talking about a narrow group or a fringe issue. We are talking about millions of Canadians, constituting Jews, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and others, who have spoken out against this change and directly written to every single Liberal MP on the other side of the House.

As was noted at committee and in submissions, Canadians hold a wide range of beliefs that some may not agree with, but in a free society, disagreement is not grounds for criminalization. That is the principle that has guided our law for decades, yet the government is now proposing to remove one of the key safeguards that protects that principle.

Christine Van Geyn of the Canadian Constitution Foundation put it clearly in her analysis of this bill. She warned that what is being proposed here is not simply a technical adjustment but rather a fundamental shift. She wrote that removing the religious defence would gut the defence that protects good-faith religious opinion or speech rooted in religious texts, and cautioned that the Liberals do not have justification for dismantling a safeguard that protects millions of Canadians from state intrusion into matters of faith. That is the core issue. Parliament does not legislate for the most extreme example. It legislates for the millions of ordinary Canadians whose rights depend on the clarity and balance of our laws.

Van Geyn also pointed to something even more significant: the constitutional foundation of the law itself. In the Supreme Court's decision of *Keegstra*, the hate propaganda provisions were upheld because of the statutory defences, including the religious defence. She notes that the court viewed these defences as essential to ensuring that the law minimally impairs freedom of expression. If we remove that safeguard, we do not simply change the law. We risk undermining the very basis on which it was upheld.

That is not a theoretical concern. That is a constitutional reality, yet, despite these warnings, these concerns and the clear need for careful study, what did the government do? It shut down debate. Through its programming motion, the government forced this bill through committee. Clause-by-clause consideration resumed under conditions where no further debate was permitted, no amendments could be meaningfully examined, and even the reading of the amendments themselves was curtailed.

● (1720)

This is legislation that would affect the Criminal Code, the most serious law we have, and it was rushed through without the scrutiny it demands, for political reasons only. This raises a deeper question. If the government is confident in this change, why not defend it? Why not allow it to be debated? Why not hear from Canadians and test the arguments openly? Instead, what we have seen is a government that has chosen speed over scrutiny, process over principle and politics over clarity.

We also need to be clear about what this change would actually do. Calls to violence and incitement of hatred are already illegal in Canada and have been so for decades. They are not protected by the religious defence. They never have been. What this defence does is protect good-faith religious expression.

As Van Geyn wrote, "religious expression is messy, symbolic and deeply human.... These are precisely the areas where the criminal law must not tread." That is a line we are now being asked to cross, and once crossed, it is not easily redrawn. This is not about protecting hate. It is about protecting the boundary between the state and the conscience of the individual. It is about ensuring that in Canada, the government does not become the arbiter of theology.

This debate ultimately comes down to a question of principle. It is not whether hate should be condemned, as it should be, and not whether Canadians should be safe, as they must be, but whether Parliament is prepared to remove a long-standing defence for freedom of expression and freedom of religion without clear justification, without proper debate and in the face of widespread concern from Canadians. This is exactly what this bill would do. It would remove the safeguard that has existed for more than 50 years. It would do so after limiting the very debate meant to test such a change.

Today, Conservatives are offering the Liberal government one more opportunity to get this right. Through our motion, we are asking that Bill C-9 be sent back to committee for one simple purpose: to restore the religious defence in section 319 of the code, which are protections that have long safeguarded good-faith religious expression in Canada.

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That is a reasonable, targeted fix that would respond directly to the concerns raised by the broad range of religious communities and civil liberty advocates across this country. It would preserve the ability to combat hate while maintaining the constitutional balance that has guided Canadian law for decades.

The question now is simple: Will the Liberal government listen? Will it listen to the legal experts who have raised constitutional concerns? Will it listen to the millions of Canadians who have spoken out, or will it continue down a path of rushed legislation, limited debate and unnecessary division?

Conservatives will always proudly stand for freedom of expression and freedom of religion, full stop. Today we are giving the Liberal government one final opportunity to stand with us to restore these protections, to respect the concerns of Canadians and to ensure that our Criminal Code reflects both justice and freedom.

Therefore, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places), be not now read a third time, but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for the purpose of reconsidering clause 4 with the view to amend the Bill so as to restore paragraph 319(3)(b) and paragraph 319(3.1)(b) of the Act, in order to preserve longstanding safeguards for good faith religious expression, address concerns raised by a broad range of religious communities across Canada, and protect freedom of expression and religion under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

• (1725)

The Deputy Speaker: After careful consideration, the amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting amendment. I am not going to be supporting the amendment, obviously, because, yet again, it is another attempt by the Conservative Party of Canada to filibuster. The Conservatives talk about limiting speech. Get serious. This has been on the table and has had hours of debate, whether in committee or in the chamber.

Let us be very clear. The Conservative Party does not want the legislation to pass, ever. It required the government to get the support of another opposition party in order to be able to have the motion that we have today. We know that it has nothing to do with religious freedom. It has more to do with the Conservative drive to raise more money. That is what this is all about for the Conservative Party of Canada. The charter guarantees religious rights. We know that.

How many hours does he believe it would require before the Conservative Party would ever concede defeat and allow the legislation to pass?

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, through all that bluster and noise, I thought I had opened up the door for any member of the Liberal government to stand up and speak directly to the millions of Canadians who would be impacted and are concerned about the position the Liberal government is taking. Why was the bill never drafted to

include the removal of a 56-year-old defence? What were the circumstances that caused the government to have a backroom deal with the Bloc Québécois to now remove that defence? Why can the member not justify that reason?

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is being proposed despite the fact that the committee had demonstrated its good faith by proposing an interpretive clause. The committee even set aside Bill C-9 to study Bill C-14 at the Conservatives' request. The committee studied Bill C-14 and then went back to Bill C-9, thinking everything would be fine, but no, even though their request was granted, the Conservatives continue to filibuster. They will say that they are not filibustering, but let us call a spade a spade. They are filibustering. They are acting in bad faith.

In the current circumstances, when hate crimes are on the rise and it is important to send a clear message that people cannot hide behind a religious exemption, the Conservatives continue to filibuster.

• (1730)

[*English*]

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, sadly, and she is probably not surprised by this, I certainly do not agree with anything my colleague had to say.

The justice committee did not debate this particular amendment in good faith. There were no witnesses called. There were no expressions by any of the Liberal members to support the Bloc amendment. The only person who raised it was the Bloc representative on the justice committee. He did not call any witnesses to justify why Canada was ready to remove a five-decade-old offence. That is the question that needs to be answered: Why?

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his avid defence of religious freedom in this chamber, at committee and across this entire country.

I was listening to the arguments from the Liberals and they seem to not take religious freedom seriously. They chalk it up to a fundraising scheme. I was wondering if my hon. colleague could lay out exactly why a defence of religious freedom is so important, because it seems that the Liberals do not understand why it is fundamental to our country.

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. This country is rooted in faith. We have faith communities and faith organizations right across this country, and they do not accept for one minute this Liberal narrative. Liberals say Canadians and faith communities have nothing to worry about and that they are still protected by the charter. It is that same false, erroneous argument they sold to Canadians when they invoked the Emergencies Act.

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They had their hands slapped twice because they breached a number of constitutional rights. I suspect that even if the Supreme Court of Canada agrees to hear this case, they are going to get their hands slapped again. Canadians do not trust the Liberal government.

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Vancouver East.

To put it bluntly, I am not convinced that this legislation, Bill C-9, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places, is necessary. I find it strange therefore that after months of making other legislation a priority, the government now wants to make this a priority.

Given the track record of the Liberal administration, I am also not convinced that this bill will change anything. The reason I say this is that we already have laws on hate crimes in Canada designed to protect vulnerable communities and people. The laws are clear. The crime is well defined. What is lacking is the political will to ensure that the laws are properly enforced. New legislation is just meaningless words without enforcement.

According to the Criminal Code, "Every person who advocates or promotes genocide is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years."

The code defines "genocide" as:

acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part any identifiable group, namely,

- (a) killing members of the group; or
- (b) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.

An identifiable group means "any section of the public distinguished by colour, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or mental or physical disability." That seems pretty clear to me.

It also says:

Every one who, by communicating statements in any public place, incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace is guilty of

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

That is also clear. Additionally, it says:

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

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

The laws are already there. What we have not seen recently is a willingness by police to lay charges, perhaps because there is no political will to enforce Canadian law against certain vocal groups. This selective enforcement has made things worse, not better, as some groups feel the law does not apply to their statements or their actions.

The Criminal Code also goes beyond the condemnation of general expressions of hateful speech to take aim at one of the biggest

problems facing Canadian society, which is anti-Semitism. The Criminal Code reads:

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

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

It is already there, but the government has chosen not to enforce the law of the land. Why does the Liberal Party believe things will change by adding another law that it probably has no intention of enforcing? Do we not have more important things to do than waste our time with virtue signalling?

Our current laws include a number of exemptions to the hate crime provisions. According to the Criminal Code, "No person shall be convicted of an offence":

- (a) if he establishes that the statements communicated were true;
- (b) if, in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text;
- (c) if the statements were relevant to any subject of public interest, the discussion of which was for the public benefit, and if on reasonable grounds he believed them to be true; or
- (d) if, in good faith, he intended to point out, for the purpose of removal, matters producing or tending to produce feelings of hatred toward an identifiable group in Canada.

● (1735)

These have long been seen as reasonable exemptions. The Supreme Court recognized this defence as necessary to keep Canada's hate speech laws constitutional, understanding how crucial freedom of expression and freedom of religion are.

When it was introduced, Bill C-9 had a similar provision for the display of hate symbols. It allowed that "No person shall be convicted of an offence":

- (a) if the display of the symbol was for a legitimate purpose, including a legitimate purpose related to journalism, religion, education or art, that is not contrary to the public interest; or
- (b) if, in good faith, the display of the symbol was intended to point out, for the purpose of removal, matters producing or tending to produce feelings of hatred toward an identifiable group in Canada.

In an unnecessary piece of legislation that duplicated what can already be found in the Criminal Code, at least there was the understanding that sometimes there can be legitimate disagreement as to just what is hateful, but now the government, in a shameful attempt at gaining the votes it needs to pass this deeply flawed bill, is willing to throw out the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom in public discussion in order to pass bad legislation. If the government has no intention of actually enforcing this anti-hate bill any more than it does the existing Criminal Code provisions, it may not matter, except that any assault on freedom of religion matters. We should not be casually doing away with constitutionally protected freedoms, especially not for political expediency.

The constituents of Edmonton Manning are opposed to this legislation and opposed to removing the religious defence from the hate crime section of the Criminal Code. When I spoke on this bill previously, I noted that the question we need to ask ourselves in the House is, how can we 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?

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. Members should ask themselves if this bill does that.

This legislation will not make Canadians safer. It will certainly not protect anyone from hate, least among them people of faith. Rather than wasting time on this flawed bill, the government should enforce the anti-hate legislation already on the books. That is something the people of Canada would support.

• (1740)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to express what I believe is the motivating factor for the Conservative Party in dealing with Bill C-9. Members of the Conservative Party are using a fear factor to generate money for their political party and to generate support. However, it is all based on social media, misinformation and emails, both to build a data bank and to raise money based on disinformation.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts about Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which actually guarantees freedom of religion so that people of faith do not have to worry about their right to freedom of religion.

Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I am really thankful to the hon. member for basically repeating what I said. We do have laws in place that protect the freedoms of Canadians, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and all that, but the government is refusing to enforce those laws while trying to communicate a political piece of legislation with the intent of gaining some votes in some areas regarding a certain segment of society. The government members are experts in retail politics. That is what the government does best. This legislation is no different from other bills it has introduced in the House.

[Translation]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are currently witnessing a spike in hateful acts and hate speech. Promoting hate is a criminal offence.

The first groups targeted by hate speech and hateful acts are members of the Jewish faith followed by members of the Muslim faith.

In October 2024, preacher Adil Charkaoui called for the death of Jews in a prayer he gave at a protest. Under the Criminal Code, this constitutes the offence of promoting hatred.

Government Orders

Why should we allow the religious exemption to be used as an excuse for promoting hatred? Why not ban it in all its forms?

[English]

Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I feel for the Bloc Québécois. The Liberals will be sharing the vote gaining in certain places with them.

As for the question, the laws are in place. We need the enforcement. There is no political will out there in the current government to enforce the laws. If the political will were there, we would not see attacks on synagogues or mosques or churches. If the government had any intention of protecting those religious institutions, we would see it emphasizing the political will to make sure that we enforce the laws that we have in place.

• (1745)

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, the hon. member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, the shadow minister for justice, proposed that the bill, in an amendment, be sent back to committee. The reason is a simple one. There are at least 15 faith-based organizations in the country who have asked that the bill be reconsidered in its current form. These faith-based organizations represent, collectively, millions of Canadians who are concerned about the bill.

Does the hon. member agree that the bill should be sent back to committee to have witnesses at least come in and talk about their concerns and that, perhaps, some more amendments could be made that would make the bill palatable to Canadians? As it stands today, the bill is not.

Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. I think there is no will in the government to do any of that. The by-election is coming soon in Quebec, and that is why the Liberals are rushing this through, to make sure there are no further amendments. If the bill is of value to the government, it would have allowed more consultation and more amendments to take place, so that we could have a better piece of legislation, rather than a useless one like the one we have right now.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a deep irony in the heart of the bill. The government claims it is about protecting Canadians from harm, yet the first thing the Liberals did was remove the good-faith protection that ensured Canadians could express their religious beliefs without fear.

I would ask my colleague why he thinks the government is so determined to remove good faith from the law and from this debate.

Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the big question. The government will always say something and do the opposite. This is one of the same symptoms we have seen many times over the last 10 years.

Government Orders

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to affirm a central New Democrat principle, which is that we must take real, meaningful action to confront hate in Canada without undermining the fundamental freedoms that define our democracy.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association and more than 40 civil society organizations raised a red flag with respect to the language in Bill C-9.

It said that the bill:

...could be used to criminalize peaceful protest and silence unpopular expression. Instead of meaningfully addressing these concerns, the truncated Committee process did very little to improve the bill and actually made the bill worse by removing the Criminal Code's good-faith religious defense without putting anything adequate in its place.

New Democrats could not agree more. We understand both the urgency of addressing hate and the necessity of protecting civil liberties. Let me be clear. Hate is real. It is rising. It is harming communities across this country: racialized communities, indigenous people and members of the 2SLGBTQ2+IA community.

However, the legislation must be precise, effective and just. It must target the actual sources of harm, not cast a wide net that risks criminalizing legitimate expression and dissent. That is why we continue to have serious concerns with the bill before us.

In fact, the member for Nunavut, on behalf of the NDP, tabled amendments at committee to try to address some of those concerns, but all of those amendments failed. The NDP position, as articulated by her, remains the same.

She stated:

The NDP believes the federal government must take comprehensive action to fight the rising tide of hate in Canada.

She went on to say:

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.

She continued:

Our public discourse must not give us fear that we will be criminalized [but this] bill seems to be more about criminalizing people who speak out than it is about addressing the growing racism against racialized people.

This is a profound critique and one we must take seriously. In fact, at committee, this important question was asked of the minister by the member for Nunavut.

She stated:

Wet'suwet'en land defenders were criminalized. Nunavut land defenders were on the verge of being criminalized. Why? It was because they were protesting government decisions.

She went on to say:

In about a week in 2024, between August 29 and September 8, Canadian police killed six first nations people. Racialized people in this country have a similar experience with law enforcement. This bill requires that Canadians trust that the police will know when an action is motivated by hate and when it is not.

Could the minister respond by sharing what safeguards protesters will have that ensure that law enforcement does not use these new powers to criminalize protesters?

No satisfactory answer was provided by the minister.

This is not just theoretical. Just yesterday, the CBC exposed the RCMP's "Native extremism program", whereby dozens of first nations leaders were put under surveillance by the RCMP and labelled as extremists, based not on credible threats but on a sweeping, intrusive campaign that treated legitimate political advocacy for land rights, self-determination and fair treatment as something to be monitored, controlled and even disrupted, with jaw-dropping intelligence dossiers stuffed with documents, wiretaps, paid informants and covert operatives with code numbers. The operation aimed to divide movements, withdraw funding and interfere with organizing in violation of their right to freedom of association and political expression and privacy.

• (1750)

Let us be very clear. In a democracy, disagreement is not a threat; it is a necessity. Protest is not a crime; it is a right. Indigenous leaders fighting for their land rights for self-determination and fair treatment is not extremism. Bill C-9 would open the door wide for Canada's institutions to continue to engage in these nefarious operations. How can we be certain that those who dare to oppose the government's Bill C-5 on major projects, which has already trampled on the rights of indigenous people, would not be criminalized under Bill C-9?

As the member for Nunavut further noted:

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.

She also noted:

On freedom of assembly...any protest that is loud enough or disruptive enough would be seen as meeting this criterion.

Peaceful protest is a cornerstone of democratic engagement. If legislation creates a chilling effect and if people begin to fear that speaking out could lead to criminal consequences, then we have fundamentally altered the nature of a public discourse. Canada already recognizes that free speech has limits. We recognize that free speech can go too far and cross a line, like when it incites violence against an identifiable group. That threshold exists for a reason. Lowering it, as this bill proposes, risks capturing conduct that should remain protected. We must be cautious not to conflate offensive speech with criminal conduct.

Government Orders

New laws in Canada must protect communities without perpetrating or creating new injustices. Bill C-9 would create new criminal offences based on vague and subjective standards, particularly based on the idea of causing fear. Let us be honest about what that means in practice. It means police officers deciding in the moment what counts as fear. It means broad discretion. It means inconsistent enforcement.

In this country, we know exactly how that story goes. It is indigenous land defenders who are arrested and surveilled. We have seen, historically and recently, how activists have been monitored and movements disrupted by law enforcement. It is racialized communities that are overpoliced. It is activists and protesters who are treated as threats, not because the law says so explicitly but because vague laws are applied unevenly. This is not justice.

The member for Nunavut is correct to say, “This bill, in its current form, gives too much discretionary power to law enforcement, allowing for subjectivity.”

I should note that Canada is not starting from zero when it comes to addressing hate. As pointed out by the member for Nunavut, “There are existing laws that address hate, [and hate] is already an aggravating factor in sentencing.” In fact, the Criminal Code already contains robust provisions, including offences related to disturbing religious worship, mischief against religious property, criminal harassment, uttering threats and intimidation.

What, then, is this bill actually doing? The member for Nunavut rightly pointed out that the bill would increase maximum sentences to five years, 10 years, 14 years and even up to life imprisonment. Let me be very clear: There is no credible evidence, none, that longer sentences deter hate crimes. What reduces crime is prevention, stability and investment in community housing, mental health care, education and opportunity. Evidence-based policy requires us to ask whether these measures would actually reduce harm or simply expand the reach of the criminal justice system in ways that may be counterproductive.

I conclude by returning to where I began. New Democrats are committed to fighting hate unequivocally. We believe in protecting communities, confronting extremism and building a more inclusive society, but we also believe in getting this policy right. We believe that legislation must be targeted, evidence-based and consistent with the charter. It must address real threats like organized white nationalist violence and not cast overly broad nets that risk infringing on fundamental freedoms.

That is why, as noted by the member for Nunavut when she wore the NDP banner, “With all the alarm bells going off about this bill, the NDP cannot support it in its current form.” That remains our position. The NDP will not support measures that compromise civil liberties, expand punitive approaches without evidence, or fail to address the root causes of hate. Canadians deserve better. The NDP will remain principled and firm on the issue, and we will oppose Bill C-9.

● (1755)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a member from Hamilton, I know it has a very strong activist community that pushed the boundary on a num-

ber of issues, as it has every right to do, and I appreciate its contributions.

However, in this context, I want to focus in on the member's comments about white nationalists and white supremacy movements growing in Canada. That is something that we have seen in Hamilton. There have been a number of white supremacist rallies, masked thugs in public with symbols of hate. Why would the member be opposed to taking stronger action against that?

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, the reality, of course, is that we already have laws in place. The Criminal Code already targets hate and the incitement of hate. What is needed is the government investing in the enforcement of those kinds of activities. What we have seen is the Liberal government cutting budgets for measures that make sure enforcement is in place. We need to make sure that what goes to the courts results in justice for the people.

Changing the laws, though, and then further criminalizing people who want to exercise their democratic right to freedom of speech and freedom of expression is wrong.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we also need are politicians with a backbone who stand behind law enforcement to enforce hate crimes in this country, but that is another subject.

I want to go back to what the hon. member said about the member for Nunavut. She cited several examples from that member in her opposition to this bill. The member for Nunavut crossed the floor. In about 30 minutes, I suspect that she is going to be voting for this bill. I am not sure how the member for Nunavut can reconcile that, and I am interested in the hon. member's opinion on that as well.

● (1800)

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, as a New Democrat, my principles do not change. People change their political colours. We have seen it in the House quite regularly, both Conservatives and an NDP member crossing over to the Liberals. The question that remains for them is this: Do their principles remain intact? Are they true to what they believe in?

I believe the comments by the member for Nunavut that I cited in the House. They were valid criticisms of the government. More than ever, we need principled stands, and the New Democrats and I take principled stands on Bill C-9. I hope those who cross the floor will do so as well.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment before asking my question. I have been listening to this debate, and clearly, the federal government is out of touch with Quebec's unique circumstances. In Quebec, we understand that secularism is a progressive value that is deeply rooted in Quebec's values since the time of the Quiet Revolution, given our history. It is a very modern and very current principle.

I will now ask my question. For an individual to be convicted of promoting hatred under the provisions of the Criminal Code and the case law, the bar is pretty high. It must involve a public speech that is made wilfully and that targets an identifiable group based on prohibited discriminatory grounds and that expresses hatred in the sense of profound detestation, including statements that expose groups or individuals to the hatred of others. It must be possible for reasonable people, informed of the context and circumstances, to interpret these statements as such.

Does my colleague believe that a protest meets these criteria? Does she not believe, rather, that a protest does not meet these criteria and that the rulings are clear?

[English]

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, the rules and laws are there, and the judges will make those decisions. The problem with Bill C-9, of course, is that it is so subjective and vague that it allows for law enforcement to interpret it however they want to interpret it. There rests the problem.

If we want to bring in precise law, let us do so. Let us not rush this through. Instead of whamming it through and bringing in the guillotine, let us have honest, true debate on the issue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): It being 6:02 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, March 10, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on the amendment.

If a member participating in person wishes that the amendment 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.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Call in the members.

- (1850)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 92)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Bexte	Bezan
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dancho
Davies (Niagara South)	DeRidder
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Falk (Provencher)	Gallant
Genius	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gladu
Goodridge	Guglielmin
Gunn	Hallan
Ho	Hoback
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Jivani
Kelly	Khanna
Kibble	Kirkland
Kmiec	Konanz
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kronis	Kuruc
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lawton	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
Mahal	Majumdar
Malette (Kapuskaing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
May	Mazier
McCauley	McKenzie
McLean (Calgary Centre)	Melillo
Menegakis	Moore
Morin	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Poilievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Reynolds	Richards
Roberts	Ross
Rowe	Ruff
Sawatzky	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shiple	Small
Steinley	Stevenson
Strahl	Strauss
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Viersen
Villeneuve	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Williamson
Zimmer	

NAYS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anandasangaree	Bains
Baker	Bardeesy
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill Riv- er)	Bendayan
Bittle	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blois
Bonin	Boulerice
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Carney	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Chang	Chartrand
Chatel	Chen
Chenette	Chi
Church	Clark
Connors	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dandurand
Danko	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
DeBellefeuille	d'Entremont
Deschênes	Deschênes-Thériault
Desrochers	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Earle
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Eyolfson
Fancy	Fanjoy
Fergus	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Fry
Fuhr	Gaheer
Gainey	Garon
Gasparro	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassi- nan)	Gould
Grant	Greaves
Guay	Guilbeault
Gull-Masty	Hajdu
Hanley	Harrison
Hepfner	Hirtle
Hogan	Housefather
Hussen	Iacono
Idlout	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Joseph	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Klassen	Koutrakis
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)	Lapointe (Sudbury)
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	Lavack
Lavoie	LeBlanc
Leitão	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Ma
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacDonald (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Maloney	McGuinty
McKelvie	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McKnight	McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Ménard	Mendès
Michel	Miedema
Miller	Mingarelli

Government Orders

Morrissey	Myles
Naqvi	Nathan
Nguyen	Noormohamed
Normandin	Ntumba
Oliphant	Olszewski
O'Rourke	Osborne
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Provost	Ramsay
Rana	Robertson
Rocheftort	Romanado
Royer	Sahota
Saini	Sari
Sari	Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke	Sgro
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sodhi
Solomon	Sousa
Ste-Marie	St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen	Thériault
Thompson	Turnbull
Valdez	van Koeverden
Vandenbeld	Watchorn
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zerucelli	Zuberi— 188

PAIRED

Members

Anand	Block
Bonk	Cormier
Dalton	Hodgson
Rood	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Stubbs	Sudds— 10

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[*English*]

The next question is on the main 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. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote, please.

● (1900)

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

(*Division No. 93*)

YEAS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anandasangaree	Bains
Baker	Bardeesy
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill Riv- er)	Bendayan
Bittle	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blois
Bonin	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Carney
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Chang

Government Orders

Chartrand	Chatel	Thériault	Thompson
Chen	Chenette	Turnbull	Valdez
Chi	Church	van Koeverden	Vandenbeld
Clark	Connors	Villeneuve	Watchorn
Coteau	Dabrusin	Weiler	Wilkinson
Dandurand	Danko	Yip	Zahid
DeBellefeuille	d'Entremont	Zerucelli	Zuberi— 186
Deschênes	Deschênes-Thériault		
Desrochers	Dhaliwal		
Dhillon	Diab		
Duclos	Duguid		
Dzerowicz	Earle	Aboutaif	Aitchison
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Albas	Allison
Erskine-Smith	Eyolfson	Anderson	Anstey
Fancy	Fanjoy	Arnold	Au
Fergus	Fisher	Baber	Bailey
Fonseca	Fortier	Baldinelli	Barlow
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Barrett	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Fraser	Fry		Bexte
Fuhr	Gaheer	Berthold	Borrelli
Gainey	Garon	Bezan	Bragdon
Gasparro	Gaudreau	Boulerice	Brock
Gerretsen	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	Brassard	Caputo
	Grant	Calkins	Chong
Gould	Guay	Chambers	Cooper
Greaves	Gull-Masty	Cobena	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Guilbeault	Hanley	Dancho	Dawson
Hajdu	Hepfner	Davies (Niagara South)	DeRidder
Harrison	Hogan	Deltell	Doherty
Hirtle	Hussen	Diotte	Duncan
Housefather	Idlout	Dowdall	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Iacono	Jeneroux	Epp	Gallant
Jaczek	Joseph	Falk (Provencher)	Généreux
Joly	Kelloway	Gazan	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Kayabaga	Klassen	Genuis	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Khalid	Lalonde	Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Koutrakis	Lamoureux	Gill (Windsor West)	Goodridge
Lambropoulos	Lapointe (Sudbury)	Gladu	Groleau
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)	Lattanzio	Gourde	Gunn
Larouche	Lavack	Guglielmin	Hardy
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Hallan	Hoback
Lavoie	Lemire	Ho	Jackson
Leitão	Long	Holman	Jivani
Lightbound	Ma	Jansen	Kelly
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacDonald (Cardigan)	Johns	Kibble
MacDonald (Malpeque)	Malette (Bay of Quinte)	Khanna	Kmiec
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	McGuinty	Kirkland	Kram
Maloney	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Konanz	Kronis
McKelvie	McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	Kramp-Neuman	Kusie
McKnight	Mendès	Kuruc	Lake
Ménard	Miedema	Kwan	Lawrence
Michel	Mingarelli	Lantsman	Leslie
Miller	Myles	Lawton	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Morrissey	Nathan	Lewis (Essex)	Lobb
Naqvi	Noormohamed	Lloyd	Majumdar
Nguyen	Ntumba	Mahal	Mantle
Normandin	Olszewski	Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	
Oliphant	Osborne	Martel	May
O'Rourke	Petitpas Taylor	Mazier	McCauley
Perron	Powlowski	McKenzie	McLean (Calgary Centre)
Plamondon	Ramsay	Melillo	Menegakis
Provost	Robertson	Moore	Morin
Rana	Romanado	Morrison	Motz
Rocheffort	Sahota	Muys	Nater
Royer	Sari	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Saini	Savard-Tremblay	Poillievre	Redekopp
Sari	Schieffe	Reid	Rempel Garner
Sawatzky	Sheehan	Reynolds	Richards
Sgro	Simard	Roberts	Ross
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Solomon	Rowe	Ruff
Sodhi	Ste-Marie	Scheer	Schmale
Sousa	Tesser Derksen	Seeback	Shipley
St-Pierre		Small	Steinley

NAYS**Members**

Stevenson
Strauss
Tochor
Uppal
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Zimmer— 137

Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vis
Warkentin
Williamson

PAIRED

Members

Anand
Bonk
Dalton
Rood
Stubbs

Block
Cormier
Hodgson
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sudds— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

• (1905)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the delay, pursuant to Standing Order 37, there will be no Private Members' Business hour today. Accordingly, the order will be rescheduled for another sitting.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am so glad to have been ready and willing to rise on this adjournment proceeding on behalf of the good people of Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

The question on which I am following up is one that has become even more timely since I asked the original question of the government in question period, although if we look at the response, we realize that question period is not an appropriate name for it. The question was dealing with the federal government's invocation of the Emergencies Act.

One may wonder why I was asking in question period about a four-year-old decision by the government. That would be a very good question. It is because, in the interceding four years, the Liberal government has failed to accept what now two courts have determined, which is that it violated the fundamental charter rights and freedoms of Canadians.

That is so important because the Federal Court and then the Federal Court of Appeal said that not only was the usage of the Emergencies Act by the Liberal government unlawful, meaning it did not meet the tests set out in the Emergencies Act, but the measures it invoked and deployed using the Emergencies Act violated the fundamental rights of Canadians.

The right to freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and the right to peacefully protest are things that in a free society, all Canadians should hold dear. It is especially timely at this exact moment,

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because moments ago the Liberal government voted for and advanced through Bill C-9, which is a bill that it has been giving very similar assurances on: that it will not violate charter rights because the charter is there to protect those rights. However, in the case of the Emergencies Act, that same pledge did not result in real protection.

Just last week, the Attorney General, the justice minister, filed for leave to appeal the Federal Court of Appeal decision on the Emergencies Act. It was on the last day by which the government could ask the Supreme Court to take on the case. It was in the last hour of the last day that the government made this move. In doing so, this so-called new government is forced to wear the decision of Justin Trudeau. The so-called new government has a new Attorney General, whom members may know from such extraordinary work as he brought to the immigration and housing files before the Prime Minister decided to put him in charge of justice. He has now had to wear the decision by David Lametti and Marco Mendicino that two courts have found to be unlawful.

This is so important because we have had a discussion in this country about how strong the charter really is and how well the charter will protect the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

I am a firm believer in the rights enumerated in the charter. These are rights that predated the charter. I would argue they are natural rights, things that need to live in the hearts and minds of Canadians, in the institutions of Canada, including the courts, and certainly in the hearts and minds of those who make the laws. We should never, as lawmakers, pass legislation or make decisions in the hope that the courts will save Canadians from their rights being violated. We must actively seek out ways to protect them in all terms.

In the case of the Emergencies Act, suppose that the government gets its appeal and the Supreme Court hears this case, and suppose that the Supreme Court makes the same finding that the Federal Court and the Federal Court of Appeal did: that the government violated the charter rights of Canadians. What good would that do five years later? The infringement has already taken place.

Why will the government not accept this ruling, vow to uphold the charter and, in doing so, listen to what two courts have said?

• (1910)

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for three long weeks in early 2022, our national capital region was not merely disrupted; it was shaken to the core. Illegal blockades seized our streets, paralyzed our capital and choked off critical trade corridors. Law-abiding Canadians were trapped in their own neighbourhoods, while workers feared for their livelihoods, and families feared for their safety.

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At a time when our country was still recovering from the devastating impacts of COVID-19, a pandemic that claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Canadians, including grandparents, parents, spouses, siblings, sons and daughters, and whose very reality, by the way, the member opposite posing this question has astonishingly continued to cast doubt upon, these actions struck at the very heart of our economic and social stability.

We have of course taken note of the decisions of the lower courts, and Canada has now sought leave for the Supreme Court of Canada to weigh in. As the member opposite knows very well, given that this matter may soon be before the court, it would be inappropriate to comment further.

On this side of the House, we respect our institutions, with legal arguments before the courts and not on the floor of the House of Commons, but if the member opposite is truly concerned about the rights and freedoms of Canadians, I have to ask why he wasted valuable time filibustering at the justice committee, talking about cats and dogs, just to run out the clock, instead of focusing on protecting those very same rights and freedoms.

Let me be clear that we are the party of the charter. We are the ones who enshrined these rights and freedoms, and I, along with my colleagues, will always stand proudly to defend the rights and freedoms that Canadians have relied upon for over 43 years.

Our government is taking concrete action. Through the combatting hate act, we would strengthen protections for Canadians' fundamental freedoms, especially the freedom of religion and the right to live safely and be who they are. The bill would make it a criminal offence to obstruct lawful access to places of worship. If individuals attempt to block the entrance to a synagogue, a mosque, a church or any other place of worship, law enforcement would have the clear authority to intervene, remove anyone obstructing access and ensure that Canadians can gather and pray in safety and dignity.

The bill would also introduce a new stand-alone hate crime offence. This means that when a crime is motivated by hatred, whether based on someone's religion, race, sexual orientation or identity, that hate would be recognized directly in the offence itself, with longer and tougher penalties, and yet the very member who claims to stand for charter rights and freedoms just voted against that legislation. My goodness.

Canadians are paying attention. Canadians know for a fact that there is no greater freedom than the freedom to be who we are, to love whom we love, to practise our faith and to live without fear of being targeted because of our identity, full stop.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with those fundamental freedoms. I just do not believe the government is being authentic in its desire to protect them.

The parliamentary secretary wanted to weave a narrative in talking about the use of the Emergencies Act involving COVID measures and the nature of the convoy, but I would note that even if all of that were accepted in the same way by everyone, which is not true in Canada, that does not mean that the use of the Emergencies Act was legitimate. I would refer to lawyer Paul Champ, who was and still is a very strong critic of the convoy. He is a lawyer representing a proposed class action against the convoy. He said, "I fully agree that the Emergencies Act is a dangerous tool that was not required."

The condemnation of the federal government's track record on civil liberties has come from the left and from the right. It has come from multiple faith groups. It has come from people who would identify as traditionally Liberal. Therefore, why do these groups, in the parliamentary secretary's eyes, not take her and her government seriously on this?

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, let me be crystal clear. It is inappropriate to comment any further on this issue.

On this side of the House, as I have mentioned before, we respect our institutions. Legal arguments belong to the courts and not on the floor of the House of Commons.

It is rich that some of these comments and questions are coming from the member whose intervention, I find, denotes a certain character. He referred to the memorial for the École Polytechnique massacre as a fake feminazi holiday. He went on live radio and suggested that denying the Holocaust is simply a matter of free speech. In 2017, in the wake of the Quebec City mosque shooting, in which six men were murdered because of their faith, he stood with Pegida, a far-right extremist movement linked to the ideology that inspired the attacker. That record speaks for itself.

I have a simple question for the member: Is this a—

• (1915)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. members for Saanich—Gulf Islands and Courtenay—Alberni not being present during the Adjournment Proceedings to raise the matters for which notices have been given, the notices are deemed withdrawn.

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 7:16 p.m.)

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