

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

Given the hour, I wonder if we could have consent from the House to call it one o'clock. We do have other members who want to speak.

[Translation]

Mr. Robitaille: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, we would be prepared to give unanimous consent, if our colleagues in the Liberal Party agree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 24(2).

At 12.59 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[Translation]

RACISM

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, during the three years she served in the Department of Justice the member for Vancouver Centre did nothing to fight groups which promote hatred or hate propaganda.

[English]

It takes political will to fight racism. We cannot afford the luxury of doing nothing, like the former Minister of Justice who now hopes to be Prime Minister.

The government's own estimates show that the March 21 anti-racism initiative is ineffective. At the same time, the government has cancelled the Race Relations Foundation, slashed anti-racism funding, and has completely ignored the issue of hate or bias crime.

S. O. 31

It is time to take these threats seriously. The former justice minister ignored the problem. I hope this one will not.

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BARRIE WELCOME CENTRE

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the efforts of the Barrie Welcome Centre. As a community service of the Barrie YMCA the Barrie Welcome Centre assists the settlement of immigrants into the Barrie area. In four years the centre has smoothed the cultural transition of over 1,300 immigrants who have come into Simcoe Centre.

The centre provides services such as translation, help with government and legal documents, information on local social services, health care, housing, employment and recreation areas.

The priority of most newcomers is to obtain a working knowledge of English. Currently it provides English grammar lessons to over 60 enthusiastic new Canadians.

Small things like these services provided by the Barrie Welcome Centre help everyone understand our cultural differences. These first steps of understanding will go a long way toward eliminating racism and helping to create a united country.

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PAKISTAN

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, the minister of minority rights in Pakistan, His Excellency Peter John Sahotra, is now visiting Canada for a few days.

Canadians urge him to ensure maximum protection in Pakistan for Christian and other religious minorities. We hope good relations between our countries will not be marred by an increase in human rights violations in either country.

The Christians, who are less than 1 per cent of the population in Pakistan, were there before the state of Pakistan was founded and have their roots there. Nevertheless, recent violent mobs have attacked Christian clerics and churches, prompting cancellation of some Christmas services.