

Government Orders

A vote for this bill is a vote against discrimination and hate toward individuals and groups. Expressions of hate should have no place in Canadian society and the bill sets out a commitment to fighting hate motivated crimes.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. If a woman is sexually assaulted that is a terrible crime. If she is violated because she is a lesbian why should that crime be treated more seriously? That is the key question here which we have not had answered by any of the debate from that side of the House. That has to be answered. If that is not answered this legislation should not be put in place.

Mr. Lastewka: Mr. Speaker, the bill talks about sex and the various areas the judges can rule on. Too often I have seen in court cases in which the law is not defined. There is a wide discrepancy from one coast to the other in Canada.

The bill puts more into the system so judges can make the decisions. When there is a sentence they will be guided as to whether it was hate motivated, yes or no. That is what is important. We are trying to get the message out to people that the government will put in stiffer laws whenever there is hate motivated crime. That should be pretty clear.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, he has not answered my question. Why is the one crime more serious than the other?

What I can see happening in our court cases is that this will simply be another make work program for lawyers. It will add a dimension to trials. They will be able to argue a crime was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. Rather than focusing on the facts of the case, that a crime was committed and that the behaviour was not acceptable, they will have another dimension added to all of these court cases. What drives this legislation? Was it possibly designed by lawyers? Was it designed by people like that who may benefit?

• (1940)

Our court trials are already expensive enough. We do not need another dimension added which this legislation will add.

The question that needs to be answered is if a woman is sexually assaulted is that not as serious as if she is violated because she belongs to some category?

Mr. Lastewka: Mr. Speaker, anywhere there is discrimination or motivated or planned hatred it does not underscore what the member opposite has put in as an example. If it is a motivated hate crime, sentencing should be dealt accordingly.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, once again I find myself debating a bill restricted by time allocation brought in by the government and its cohorts in the Bloc Quebecois.

When time allocation was introduced for Bill C-41, Bill C-68 and Bill C-85, the Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs said the government was forced to do so because the Reform Party had introduced hundreds of amendments aimed solely at stalling the passage of the bill.

When we look at the amendments introduced at report stage on Bill C-41, we see there are a total of 25. Of those 25 amendments only five were Reform Party amendments. How can the secretary of state possibly claim that by submitting five of the 25 amendments the Reform Party was trying to stall Bill C-41?

How can the government possibly claim time allocation was necessary to get the bill passed when it was tabled at report stage on March 22? The government has had almost three months to get the legislation passed.

It is not the Reform Party causing problems for the government on the bill, it is a few Liberal backbenchers causing the government so much anxiety it had to invoke time allocation to get the bill passed with as little debate as possible.

On the quality of debate, I raise some comments made by the member for Vancouver Centre. I am glad to see she has rejoined us so she can hear me. I am bothered that the member for Vancouver Centre had the audacity to question the member for Crowfoot whether he had read the entire bill. I do not recall seeing the member for Vancouver Centre sitting in the justice committee for months and months listening to witnesses or going through the bill clause by clause, trying to make it into something better.

The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore said this bill is a law of hate motivated crime and that was the sole intent and purpose of it. Maybe these individuals should take a few minutes off and actually read the bill and find out it is about a lot more than hate motivated crime. The member from the Bloc who spoke should do so as well. This bill is about sentencing. It is about alternative measures. It is about breach of trust by public officials and section 745, so much more than hate motivated crime. Having sat through months of testimony on Bill C-41 in the justice committee, it is a shame that many of the aspects of the bill about which I have spoken have been overlooked because of the words sexual orientation being brought into section 718.2 of the Criminal Code and of having an enumerated list of qualifiers.

• (1945)

The hon. member for Rosedale and the hon. member for Vancouver Centre raised the fact that the police were fully behind the bill. As other members have said, the police association is not behind the bill. When the justice minister was promoting his infamous Bill C-68, the gun control legislation, he held up the chiefs of police and the Canadian Police Association as institutions that supported the gun legislation and asked how Canadians could not support it. I will tell government members that the chiefs of police and the Canadian Police Association do not support Bill C-41. I quote the Canadian Police Association which stated: