

Government Orders

It is important to take note of the fact that all of the groups specified in the proposed legislation are afforded equal protection. I reiterate: equal protection. For example, hate crimes against males are treated in the same manner as hate crimes against females. Caucasians are afforded the same protection as Orientals; Christians the same as Muslims; anglophones the same as francophones; heterosexuals the same as homosexuals; and Ukrainian Canadians the same as Iranian Canadians and native Canadians.

Each of these mentioned groups at some time or other can be potential victims of hate crimes. All of them have been singled out for excessive negative treatment by someone for some reason. Why? It is ignorance, pure and simple. Ignorance is the foundation of this negative form of behaviour. It is nurtured by someone for someone's advantage, whether it is for control of a group, greed, or to keep people in a state of ignorance so that they will never know there is something better around the corner.

Fear is another controlling factor. This points out to me and to everyone else that there is a desperate need for education, education that will enhance the image of every single Canadian to the point where they will feel secure in the decision making and the choices they make and someone else who is trying to manipulate them for some unknown reason will not degrade them, debase them, and humiliate them to the point where their self-concept is practically destroyed.

Remember that most people who attack other people and hate other people have very poor self-concepts. Because of the poor self-concept they have, they are trying their very best to knock someone else down to a much lower level of esteem.

• (2010)

Given the above realities, one is astounded as to how opponents of the bill can possibly come to the conclusion that any particular group is being granted special protection. The above clearly indicates that in fact everyone is treated equally. Yes, every hate crime as well is treated equally.

Bill C-41 does not give special rights to anyone. It protects all Canadians. Every Canadian has a nationality, a race, an age, a gender, a sexual orientation, and a religious belief. If there is a member in the House who believes he or she is an exception to this rule, please let them stand and be counted.

Since no one has risen, I will assume I was correct in my assumption.

Another misguided criticism regards that claim that inclusion of the term sexual orientation would somehow serve to promote homosexuality. This allegation hardly deserves a response. I cannot for one moment think of a way in which this bill would serve to

promote a certain sexual orientation, or any other group protected by Bill C-41 for that matter.

Some opponents of this bill have been misled into believing that Bill C-41 involves changes that would include the recognition of same sex marriages and even same sex benefits. This is absolutely ludicrous. This bill deals with crimes in the Criminal Code, not with same sex issues.

The civil and political rights of gays and lesbians will be debated in a completely different context, that being within the context of national and international human rights. Those civil and political rights are completely unrelated to the bill that is being discussed today. Some members in the House have been able to make the distinction. In fact, judging from the debate I heard today and yesterday in the House, some members have been having a terribly difficult time in doing so.

Furthermore, I fear that some have utilized this debate as an opportunity to voice their dislike for certain lifestyles. Although I do agree that they are privy to their own opinions in this respect, I most certainly believe that today's debate is not the forum for them to voice these opinions. We must deal with this area of concern in a rational manner and not emotionally.

Today's debate is concerned with the pressing need to prevent offences of hate motivated violence in Canada. This distinction we must keep in mind.

It is quite apparent that the allegations and criticisms aimed at Bill C-41 are entirely unfounded and misleading. These criticisms are based upon half-truths and misconceptions as well as misperceptions.

For those who are opposed to the listing of the various characteristics of the individual in this clause, please remember that the hate crime section is meaningless without the list. In several rulings the Supreme Court of Canada has warned that any hate related legislation must be very, very precise and identify target groups it intends to protect.

I urge all members in the House to objectively analyse the debate surrounding this bill and make a decision based upon the principles of justice, equity, and fairness.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan for lowering the tensions in the room and debating on a somewhat lighter level than we have been getting. Of course I think that is only just, because we are dealing with a very frivolous bill.

All the members opposite who have spoken seemed to zero in on one section of the bill. No one remembers that the bill is thick and includes a great number of clauses many of which are as equally bad as the one all of them seem to want to debate.