



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 144 • NUMBER 094 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, October 9, 2009

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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

Statements by Members

Why will the Liberal leader not get engaged, show some leadership and see to it that this bill is passed?

This proves that the Liberal leader is not sincere in fighting crime. He says one thing in public, but behind the scenes, something very different is taking place. He is not in it for Canadians. He is in it for himself.

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• (1110)

TAX HARMONIZATION

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Wendell, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the constituents of the Niagara region are strongly opposed to the harmonization of the provincial sales tax with the GST. Families in my riding of Wendell are in a daily struggle to make ends meet. Placing an additional 8% on essential everyday purchases is the wrong decision to make.

Unfortunately for Ontario families, the Conservatives and the Liberals agree that raising taxes through harmonization is a good decision.

The Niagara region has been hit exceptionally hard by the decline in manufacturing jobs. The Conservative government should be focused on what is really important, making changes to EI and the pension system to put more money in people's pockets rather than being obsessed on raising sales taxes by 8%.

In harmonizing sales taxes, the Conservative government is shifting the tax burden from big business and big banks and forcing all Ontarians to pay more.

New Democrats will continue to stand up for all Ontarians and will oppose this tax grab, especially at this critical time when governments should be finding more ways to put money back into people's pockets rather than finding more ways to take money out of their pockets.

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[*Translation*]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again the Liberals' simplistic thinking is evident. While the Liberal senators are using every possible means to gut Bill C-25, which limits credit for time spent in pre-sentencing custody, the leader of the Liberal Party is unconcerned and has no empathy for victims. It is ironic coming from this very leader who, just yesterday, was himself playing the victim and acknowledging that he would actually have to work.

This sad spectacle shows once more that to be a Liberal is to be out in left field and short on ideas.

Our government has the interests of Quebeckers and Canadians at heart. We will not allow the true victims of crime to bear the burden because of the Liberals or because of the Bloc, which votes against everything.

2009 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, we learned that the Nobel Peace Prize for 2009 is to be awarded to U.S. president Barack Obama, making him the third sitting U.S. president to be awarded this prestigious award.

His election brought hope all over the world. The prize recognizes president Obama's efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation, advocating multilateral diplomacy and dialogue instead of the repressive and confrontational approach of the previous administration. Immediately upon taking office, he reached out to nations previously viewed as "the enemy", stating in a speech given in Cairo that this cycle of suspicion and discord had to end.

He is also being recognized for his commitment to nuclear disarmament and to fighting climate change.

President Obama has definitely set the winds of change blowing, in deep contrast with the worldview of the previous administration and that of its friends from the Conservative Party of Canada.

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[*English*]

MENTAL HEALTH

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to Canadian Mental Illness Awareness Week.

[*Translation*]

Canadians living with mental illness have been cast aside for too long, and too few sufferers dare ask for the help they need.

[*English*]

This week provides all Canadians with the opportunity to better understand mental illness. By encouraging those affected to seek help, we can reduce the burden of mental illness on sufferers and our society.

[*Translation*]

The negative attitude of the public and of health professionals only adds to the heavy burden on society and on sufferers, who deserve help and understanding instead.

[*English*]

I particularly want to pay tribute to Darrell Powell and his work on injury due to occupation and the link with mental illness. We thank him for his vision and his courage.

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TAXATION

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week we learned that the Liberals wish to have an "adult conversation" with Canadians about raising their taxes. This is not surprising. The Liberal leader describes himself as a tax and spend Liberal. He says he wants to increase the GST. He was the first Liberal to argue for a carbon tax on everything.

Why would the Liberal leader want to make it harder for Canadians to pay their bills and provide for their families? It is simple. He needs more money to pay for all of the big ticket spending projects he has promised.