

Government Orders

Mr. Keyes: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Parkdale—High Park, for that question.

I suppose we can break it down by looking at the big picture. The big picture is that we seem to have a bill that is building and building and building. It gets larger and it is being adjusted and readjusted and worked on from a root or from its original conceptions, which I believe are very different today than they were years ago when we first started to put a law like this together. Maybe what we have to do is just set this bill aside, set this type of legislation or this direction aside for a moment. Let us start fresh. Let us clear our heads for a second.

This leads me into the second side of this issue. If there is a criminal who performs a criminal act, and we can break it down into the non-violent and violent, et cetera, and he performs that criminal act within the community of Parkdale—High Park or Hamilton West then the community deserves the payback from that individual who did the injustice in that community.

The member is absolutely right about where these criminals are being rehabilitated and where the day passes and parole and the rest of it is being carried out. We all know that it boils down to the almighty buck again with this government because it says that it is going to be more convenient. Go to a city and create a building where we can put all these individuals in order for them to try to rehabilitate themselves. What we are doing is we are taking these individuals, again lumping them all together with all their problems, where they are together in one building or one area, and then hopefully instructing them with books and what have you to rehabilitate themselves in order for eventual release back into the community, not into the community where the offence occurred, but in the community where the government has deemed that it will put all its resources together at one spot in order for that individual to be part of the lump of individuals that are eventually going to have to be released into the community.

Mr. Flis: An abandoned liquor store in my riding.

Mr. Keyes: An abandoned liquor store in Parkdale—High Park, the member says. That is just terrific. Where is the rehabilitation, a cot in an abandoned liquor store?

This bill does not put the emphasis on prevention and how to help an individual who is rehabilitatable, who has not committed the offence a second time but a first time, a non-violent offence, and went wrong somewhere along the way. Maybe we can help him or her adjust with the situation that created that individual to carry out that particular crime. Maybe they are very rehabilitatable, but let us rehabilitate them back into their communities where they are very familiar, where the crime took place. Maybe they broke a window at a grocery store and now part of that rehabilitation is to work in that grocery store and repay that grocer who had to pay for his window to be fixed.

Maybe that is the kind of rehabilitation we need but in concert of course with the programs that would be provided by psychiatrists and psychologists and all the other professional people who would help that individual.

Is that part of this bill? Is prevention part of this bill? Is money being directed or spent or part of this legislation being created in order to help those individuals who are currently in jail, who are in our society headed toward jail? No. That is what makes this bill a toothless, pathetic response to our communities.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-36, an act to amend the correctional system in Canada and to set out in the government's mind, new ways of proceeding with problems in the penal and correctional system.

Our party has opposed this piece of legislation. I would like to spend a minute explaining why we oppose it and then explain what I think should be done at the community level.

The purpose of the bill according to the government is to reform the correctional legislation so that it better reflects the values and concerns of Canadians. Above all, these measures assert that the primary duty of the correctional system is the protection of the public.

Our response is that the vast majority of the bill either codifies existing procedures or restates what is already in the Penitentiary Act or the Parole Act. It is therefore a deceiving piece of legislation, pretending to do what it does not do, namely reform correctional legislation. It only tinkers with it.