

control legislation brought before us in the history of Canada.

We have legislation concerning guns that will and should control the criminal if it is properly used. Now we see this government of ours bringing in this kind of legislation, wanting it to have as little discussion as possible, so that the people of Canada cannot understand what is really going on. The government wants to get it into committee, of course, because when it is being discussed in committee there is no record for the people of Canada to follow.

It appears to me that the government wants to get it into committee to try to take the heat off, and then maybe it can get some more of its high-pressured advertising going to try to convince the people of Canada that it is right. But I do not think it is going to be able to do so in this case. I believe the people have caught on to the tactics of this government.

At one time, even I was hoping that the government was going to be serious in its presentation of Bill C-83, the peace and security bill, that it would be getting tougher with law and order. But, just at that moment, we had the judges' affair. We found that cabinet ministers were calling judges about court cases. At that same moment we were able to know and understand that the government was not serious. If it had been serious, the Prime Minister would not have hesitated to call a public inquiry into the judges' affair. This would really have demonstrated to the people of Canada that there was some seriousness, but he did not, and so they in turn are not going to take him very seriously.

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Parliamentary Secretary to Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-83 and Bill C-84 are companion pieces of legislation. Their one basic purpose is an attempt to achieve a society with less violence. One reason I feel very strongly about Bill C-84, and I will just mention this before dealing with C-83, is that to achieve a society with less violence we cannot use violent means. It is for this reason I am an abolitionist. This is not for me a matter of conscience or morality; it is just a fact that you cannot have less violence by using conscious violent means. Bill C-83 is an attempt to reduce violence in our society.

For a few minutes I should like to discuss this general area of violence and the reason for the increase in the use of violence in our society. Let me refer to some statistics.

In 1970 the total number of offences against the Criminal Code committed in Canada was 1.1 million. In the four years from then to 1974 this grew to 1.45 million, or about one criminal offence for every 17 persons in Canada. Of course, that is an incorrect way of phrasing it because some people committed more than one offence. There was an increase in crime in that period of 31.8 per cent. In the same period, violent crimes such as rape, murder and armed robbery, increased by 23.5 per cent. As a percentage of the total amount of crime, violent crimes decreased from 9.2 per cent to 8.7 per cent. However, that does not mean we do not have a problem.

Measures Against Crime

● (1540)

I wish to present another set of figures comparing crime in this country with that of the United States. In the period between 1970 and 1974 violent crime increased by 23.5 per cent in Canada and 24 per cent in the United States. The significant figure is that in 1974, there were 2.6 violent crimes for every 100,000 population in Canada as opposed to 9.7 violent crimes for every 100,000 population in the United States, about four times as much. I state those figures because they are significant when dealing with the whole area of violence which is basically what is dealt with in this bill.

There are many reasons why violent crime is on the increase. First and foremost is the general insecurity of our times. We live in a very unique time. I do not think there is any period in history that can compare with the present time. Things move very rapidly. We have inflation, resource shortages and a whole series of problems. People feel insecure. They live under severe pressure. Change occurs at a very rapid rate.

There is a basic element of conflict in the way we view life in our society. This conflict shows itself in many ways. One is in the whole area of violence. Another is in the increased use of drugs. If one were to analyse these statistics, 23 or 24 per cent over that period of time in Canada, and the same in the United States, one would see that drugs were very much an element in violent crime. However, I see drugs more as a result of the conflict of our times and the difficulties of the period we live in rather than they themselves being the basic problem, although they do present an additional set of problems. The basic problem is insecurity and the times in which we live.

There is another factor of which we must be cognizant, that is the accent in the media, television in particular, on violence. When we compare the figure of 9.7 per 100,000 in the United States as opposed to 2.6 in Canada for violent crimes, we can see that some of this violence flows over through the media, television in particular, into Canadian society from the United States. Young people watch thousands of shootings and killings on television during their formative years. That is another factor that has to be looked at; it is not dealt with in this bill, but it is something we have to think about.

I would like to deal with the educational system. I spent 20 years in it, 17 years as principal of a high school. I am very concerned about something that is happening in our schools which I believe it is contributing to a violent type of society.

I am sure hon. members recall the tragedy in Brampton last spring when one student shot two people and tried to kill a third. A similar incident occurred in an Ottawa high school last fall. We should not look at those two crimes as isolated incidents because there are other forms of violence which do not show up in the courts. For example, the suicide rate in our high schools is very high.

I do not like to oversimplify things, but there is something they are doing in our schools that I consider very dangerous. Our schools have grown large. We have taken the attitude that in a school with an enrolment of 1,800, we can offer more courses and this is good. We have computerized our school system. We have taken individual students