

*Private Members' Business*

We did follow through. We did listen to our constituents and the people of Edmonton and brought forward this bill. I am pleased to say that I believe it had an impact on the government because the government then brought forward its own bill.

At the meeting with the victims of Larry Takahashi they presented us with a list of nine demands which I would like to go over. I want to read into the record their letter that they gave to us that day. It is addressed to the Solicitor General of Canada, and to the Prime Minister of Canada. It reads as follows:

We as victims feel we have the right and privilege to contest the day passes awarded to Larry Takahashi.

Our first-hand experience is that he is dangerous and psychotic. We further believe that the judicial system is failing in its mandate to protect the public. We are also of the opinion that Larry Takahashi has a dual, or split, personality. He fooled the public and his family before in believing him to be a "nice" guy and active in the community. He is now doing the same in the prison and they are "falling for it".

This is making a complete mockery of our judicial system. How can we put any kind of trust in a system where three life sentences plus 73 years mean absolutely nothing? There is no credibility; no effectuality deemed by this sentence. What are the repercussions in a society where punishment is not matched to the crime?

This is a letter from six victims of Larry Takahashi who are very, very concerned and in fact scared that he might come back to get them and revisit the crimes.

The demands or requests are as follows:

1. Three life sentences plus 73 years should indicate the amount of time an offender should serve.

I tried to indicate this in our bill. I am willing to accept other arguments about consecutive sentences, but I think we should go in the direction of saying that a sentence should be a sentence in indicating what three life sentences and 73 years really mean.

2. There should be a stronger line of communication between the court system and the Parole Board.

We agree with that and I believe Bill C-36 has enacted, in regulation form, some stronger lines of communication.

3. Dangerous serial rapists should not be awarded the same rights as other offenders. Their time served for eligibility for parole should not be on the same status as someone who commits a lesser offence.

4. Due to financial considerations, 122 women were denied their rights to appear in court to tell their story about the violence committed against them.

One of the reasons for this is the cost of the time in the court system, but many of these victims, I believe, should have had a right to put their views forward. That is why we included the victim impact statement. For those victims where the charges are dropped, they still can have their say in court through the victim impact statement.

• (1730)

They said to me that, as a result, the Solicitor General and the public at large is led to believe that only seven women were raped. That is not true. Many, many more were raped, but due to time and the processes of court, this was not explored.

5. The court should not have the right to dismiss a victim's charges without prior approval from the victim.

They wanted to give some control to those victims.

In Takahashi's case, 122 voices were not heard. The decision was made on behalf of these women solely on the basis of cost and the trauma that would be incurred. These actions make us feel invisible and discounted.

It is a travesty, I believe, not to listen to the voices of these women.

6. The victims should have the right to be informed of any changes in status of the prison term of the offender, i.e., day passes or parole.

7. Victims should have the resources and opportunity to be rehabilitated back into society, just as the offender is.

8. We believe there should be a recognition of the violence committed against women. Value is attached to the destruction of material objects (such as a broken window) but no value is attached to the destruction of an emotionally sound and well being.

9. It should be mandatory that the victim impact statement be read by the Parole Board prior to review of the offender's application for parole.

I believe I responded to the concerns of these victims. I believe the government has responded. We are well on our way to dealing with the problem of violence against women. The government has a number of initiatives in that respect and we are working on those. We could do much, much more.

On their point number one, they indicated that a concurrent sentence means nothing. I would like to quote from our meeting. They said that it was sickening that information about Larry Takahashi's recreational passes had to be leaked by a prison guard. They thought that the privacy rules were too strong in this case and that the weight given to the protection of the public should be paramount.