

Private Members' Business

That is the essence of Canada. That is why we are proud of our flag. We do not need to add another law. We have enough laws surely.

If the hon. member wants to change the justice system, because this is what his bill does, how about a bill on the Young Offenders Act to deal with the young offenders people are complaining about? Or what about the the Parole Act?

Mr. Hicks: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, once again I am enthralled by the eloquence of this hon. member, but I have listened carefully to his over-all philosophy of justice in general. I am wondering when he is going to address the amendments which are on the Order Paper this morning.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is always a sensitive issue for the Chair to assess the relevancy of the debate. Of course, with a bill like this one, members are bound to deal with the principle of the bill already approved by this House at the same time as the amendments. Again, I am willing to show tolerance.

[*English*]

Mr. Waddell: If the hon. member recalls, I have said that his first amendment is going to give rise to litigation in its uncertainty. The second amendment is going to give rise to more litigation and possibly more acquittals than convictions.

Finally, I have been saying that if you want to amend the Criminal Code, there are so many other areas. Dangerous offenders. My constituents want to know why convicted paedophiles are getting out of jail and are out committing the same offence. We get a bill on the flag. The crossbow incident. Why do we not have a bill making crossbows illegal in this country like guns? According to the police, at the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Burnaby last week a young woman was killed by a crossbow, like there was in Ottawa. Why not have a bill dealing with violence against women?

Instead this bill shows a complete lack of imagination. It is going for the easy hit: I love the flag. That can be sent out to constituents. Someone has to get up as I am trying to today to tell the House that this is nonsense.

I think my friend from the Liberal Party covered most of the other matters. I will conclude by saying that the

problem with the bill is there is some question about the amendments, whether they are workable in law.

There are so many other things to do where we could amend the Criminal Code. This bill will hurt police, not help them. It will make difficult work for police in demonstrations and like incidents. It is going to make martyrs out of people, rather than ignore them and show how stupid they are in the way they treat the flag. Just ignore them and they will go away. Real patriotism goes a lot deeper than a quick-hit bill to amend the Criminal Code.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, this is Private Members' Hour. We have a private member's bill before us. I certainly am not going to criticize the motivation of the sponsor of this bill. I think his motivation is most sincere. He believes with real justification that he has a lot of public support for the bill. He certainly has demonstrated that he has support in this House.

I am on my feet during Private Members' Hour as a private member. I want to share with my hon. friend from Scarborough East some of the concerns I have about his bill, even with the amendments which I concede have considerably improved it.

As we travel abroad we recognize the touchstone the maple-leaf flag is for us when we see it, whether it is on the shoulder patch of a United Nations peacekeeper or whether it is on the backpack of a young hitch-hiker elsewhere in the world.

We have demonstrated a good deal of contradiction, confusion and irresolution when it comes to matters pertaining to the flag. We need only go back to the debate leading up to the February 1965 adoption of our current flag to realize that. I think a lot of that concern is still there.

Part of the reason for that is that Canada by many standards is a work in progress. I can recall when my late mother was involved with the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire or, as her friends said, "in and out of the damndest enterprises". She was one of those who fought long and hard to retain the red ensign as the flag of Canada. However, the moment the maple-leaf flag was adopted as our flag in 1965 she and her sisters in the IODE William MacKay Chapter began selling maple-leaf flags as a fund-raising project. It is interesting how quickly we adopt our new symbols.