

Adjournment Debate

it is domestic. These figures make it obvious that tighter customs and excise laws are required to keep this filth from entering Canada.

Police estimates have placed the annual Canadian market in pornography at \$300 million. There is increasing concern in Canada that more pornographic material is available than ever before and that it is in character more explicit and violent than it has been in the past. Another estimate is that 30 per cent of all Canadian news-stand sales consist of periodicals which would have been illegal 20 years ago, so relaxed have community standards become.

The Fraser Committee, the special committee on pornography and prostitution, was established by the Department of Justice. Its mandate was to investigate the current system in Canada with respect to pornography and prostitution and make recommendations for legal and social reform. The committee made several significant findings about pornography in Canada. It strongly submitted that there is a definite harm associated with much of what is pornographic, that it exhibits and encourages attitudes and activities which are detrimental to the quality of the lives of men and women and that it presents demeaning images as being normal. The concerns of most witnesses at the committee hearings were that pornography degrades women, that male violence against women is treated as socially acceptable and viewers are desensitized to suffering and that there is a strong negative influence on children and the family.

The Fraser Committee also conducted research in several countries with social and cultural traditions similar to Canada's. Their research revealed three trends: first, in all jurisdictions, there is a movement toward a less restrictive approach to sexually explicit material; second, there is a growing concern about child pornography; and third, there is a growing concern about the video explosion and the introduction of legislation to regulate the distribution, sale and rental of videos.

The Fraser Committee proposed a thorough revision of the criminal law in relation to obscenity. The term "obscenity" and the offences related to it in the current Criminal Code would be dropped to be replaced by a three-tiered system of prohibitions to define and categorize pornography. This would replace the subjective community standards test now used by the courts to determine obscenity.

The first tier, under which offences would be the most seriously punished, would involve the making, printing, publishing or distribution of visual pornographic material which was produced in such a way that actual physical harm was caused to the persons depicted. This tier would also include visual representation of persons under 18 participating in explicit sexual activities or material which presents as normal the sexual abuse of children. This offence would be punishable by 10 years imprisonment.

The second tier would apply to sexually violent and degrading pornography, including sexually violent behaviour,

bestiality and the like. Its production or distribution would be punishable by five years imprisonment. The third tier would involve the display of pornographic material in a public place. It would be an offence to sell these materials to persons under 18 years of age. This tier might perhaps be an appropriate one in which the test for community standards apply.

Since most of the pornographic material in Canada is imported, it is important to note that Canada Customs has jurisdiction to examine all goods entering Canada. If, in the judgment of the examining customs officer, the materials constitute explicit pornography, they are so classified and are prohibited entry. The importer is advised of this and can appeal this decision. If the appeal is denied, the importer can appeal further.

At the Fraser Committee hearings, concern was expressed about the increased availability of pornographic material and an implied increase in the number of people who are exposed, willingly or unwillingly to such material, and the resulting harm to individuals and society. This trend is truly cancerous in so far as its impact on the morals of the country and the quality of life in which we take so much pride. A recent poll by two leading U.S. experts found that people who have repeatedly been exposed to non-violent pornography develop a preference for more exotic material, and that includes violence. In other words, it is addictive. Hard core comes from soft core and this process goes on until we completely desensitize people who are afflicted by this problem.

• (1805)

There are, however, a few positive actions being taken. The 7-Eleven convenience stores have recently announced that they will stop selling magazines such as *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and *Forum* after the May issue. We applaud the management of that company for such action.

In my riding of Don Valley East, hundreds of people are extremely concerned about this issue. Many have written to me, including Mrs. Michaeline Bennet, M. E. Ward, H. C. Frawley, J. Looby, Mary B. Desautels, Mrs. C. Kennedy and Clare McKee. On Saturday, April 26, we will convene a policy conference at which we expect 100 to 200 people. Sergeant Wendy Leaver of Project P, Metropolitan Police, will lecture and show us the type of garbage and filth that is now all too readily available in different stores.

I look forward to obtaining the views of the residents of Don Valley East and their recommendations. I intend to come back to Ottawa and recommend those thoughts, whatever comes out of that meeting on Saturday, in the strongest possible terms to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) so that we do not commit the crime of inaction of not taking this subject seriously enough.

We honour and take very seriously the responsibility we have as legislators to protect society from these insidious trends that we have seen eroding the quality of life in Canada, eroding the values of people and eroding family life. It is one