

Government Orders

This bill before us today will certainly not get support from this side of the House. There is the lack of funding for those programs that are truly essential to deal with the root cause, the problems in our society today, in order to prevent the creation of more people to feed into a criminal justice system.

I am sure everyone would take great delight in closing down a federal prison or a jail in any community because there were not enough people to put in it. Would it not be a marvellous day one day to be able to do that?

When you think about it for a moment, the only way we are going to be able to do that is if life or property or the values of your neighbour are respected so that of course that crime is not allowed to happen in the first place.

Where do we start? We start with our youth. We direct our love and our compassion and our concern and our aid and do everything we possibly can to ensure that that young individual does not have to turn to a life of crime.

Sometimes it is not because they have turned to the life of crime, for whatever reason. It is because they have grown up in an environment that has caused them to turn to a life of crime. Has this government ever come forward with the fiscal policies or monetary policies or the programs for the children who are in need of help today in order that we can prevent filing them in a line and sending them off through a judicial system because they, through virtually no fault of their own, have had to turn to that life of crime?

Is it because we do not help those who are unable to find a job, because we have cut back on programs and services and the opportunities for those people who want a job, who want to be able to feed their families, whose children sit at home and must end up after school, sometimes not even in school, at the corner shopping mall? Is it because their parents did not have the money to provide or give them the opportunity to participate in the extra-curricular activities?

This government has presented for me personally, for my constituents in Hamilton West, for this side of the House, example after example after example over the last three and a half years, closing in on four years, of neglect of our communities.

I have always said that I have tried to bring Hamilton to Ottawa. Unfortunately what I have seen this government do is bring Ottawa to Hamilton. Be in your communities. Talk to your people. Get a feeling and understanding of what the root causes are of this problem. The government created Bill C-36 which is nothing more than weak-kneed rubber-stamping and toothless.

We have a future and our future is with our young people. Let us direct our resources at the programs that can ensure that we have youth who will one day hopefully grow up in a society that will not see all the problems which have caused the government to create a judicial system that is neglectful and that does not answer the questions that my constituents and other constituents want answers to today.

• (1230)

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for Hamilton West and the previous speaker because both of them underlined looking at the causes of crime, something that this government is not doing.

My riding is in the Toronto area and his riding is in the Hamilton area. The bill says that the purpose of the bill is to contribute to a just, peaceful and safe society. It then says "assisting the rehabilitation of offenders and their re-integration into the community as law-abiding citizens through the provision of programs in penitentiaries and in the community".

The member has studied this bill quite closely. What is meant in this bill by community? If an offender from his riding, for example, commits a crime and then is rehabilitated back, would it be back to his community? The problem I am getting in my constituency is that people are being integrated back into the community, but the poor people of Parkdale—High Park are integrating former offenders from all over Ontario and from all over Canada.

Is it fair for the Parkdale community to be doing a job that other communities are supposed to be doing? Does the member have the same problem in Hamilton? How does he see the definition of community?