

Government Orders

an act written by lawyers for lawyers. I think of the constituent who asked rather plaintively: "Can't you pass a law down there forbidding lawyers to run for Parliament?"

In the House on June 6 the hon. member for Saint Hubert said: "These motions will be similar to extradition proceedings. It is going to be a waste of energy and public funds and through it all young persons will learn how to foil the system and scoff at the law". I rarely agree with anything the hon. member says but I certainly agree with that. She was spot on.

Of course her proposed solution differs from mine. She would continue to treat these louts like poor little misguided children, subject to the same rules as 13 and 14-year olds. People of 16 and 17 are not children, for heaven's sake. They hold down jobs. They drive cars. They have babies with or without the benefit of matrimony. If they are unhappy in the parental home generous social welfare will in most provinces provide reasonably comfortable independence.

• (1715)

Bill C-37, rather than ensuring that these older young offenders will end up in adult court, makes it less likely than ever because of the reasons I have cited. I do not want to sound like a nagging parent saying "when I was your age—", but at the age of 17 I was working in a bush camp swinging an axe to raise money so I could enter university. If anyone had dared to suggest to me that I was a child I would have been outraged. We do young people no favours by relieving them of responsibility.

One of the hon. members opposite probably will not believe this, but I can actually remember when I was 10 to 13-years old. My companions and I fought regularly but never dreamed of using the knives which as farm boys we all carried. We did not try to maim each other. We had an archaic code of conduct which might seem terribly quaint to the lawyers and social workers who have been trying to redesign our society.

You did not kick somebody who was down. You did not pick on little kids or gang up on anyone and you never, never hit girls. In other words, we knew the difference between right and wrong; so did my kids as recently as 20 years ago.

I venture to say to the young savages who terrorize their weaker classmates, vandalize property and give the finger to their powerless teachers, to exempt 10 and 11-year olds from the rules of civilized conduct is socially destructive madness. A child who gets away with it at 10 or 11 and whose parents are not held legally accountable for his or her actions learns a lesson which all the prattling counsellors and dreamy eyed social workers in the world cannot erase.

Now the minister tells us that section 43 of the Criminal Code which protects parents who do care about their kids and use reasonable force to discipline them is up for review. What strange world does the Liberal Party inhabit?

The road from uncorrected naughtiness to mean destructiveness to full blown delinquency is short and straight. The government owes it to the children of Canada and to the future of our society to re-enter the world of every day Canadians. Bill C-37 is a start, but only a start. Let us get on with it.

Madam Speaker, I neglected to inform you that I am splitting my time with the hon. member for Red Deer. I hope I can put that in now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I agree to accept it. You have already gone over. We had better get to questions and comments.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): I listened to the member, and he sounds as if he no longer belongs to the Reform Party, but rather to the nostalgia party. These problems are today's problems, and I think that they cannot be solved the way the member suggested. I think that the problem of young offenders is much deeper than it appears at first glance. When young people turn the TV on, what do they see? Violence. In today's papers, we can read that a father seems to have left his firearms unattended since a 10-year old brought army revolvers to school. I think that there is a problem with educating parents and making them aware of potential problems with their children. I believe it to be a much deeper problem.

I would like to hear from the member who comes from western Canada if in his province they have a mechanism to deal with these young offenders.

• (1720)

Is there some mechanism to decriminalize their cases, to steer them towards rehabilitation and social reintegration or is it an area, in this great and beautiful country, where they put young offenders in block A, and the adults in block B? Do they send them to the best crime school to turn them into real outlaws later on?

[English]

Mr. Morrison: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his questions. He must be aware that reform schools or youth wings, as he calls them, do not exist anywhere in Canada any more.

I am advocating, and I am advocating strongly, that doing away with them was a mistake because there is now no real mechanism to deal with these young people. We have the open custody situation or we have jails for adults. We really do not have much in between. We have youngsters in remand centres interminably.

They get into more trouble there; they get educated. That is why we should have reform schools where they get proper education. Yes, I am nostalgic. I do yearn for a period of our history when society was orderly, when there was a discipline of