

*Private Members' Business*

The opposition parties support Bill C-45 on the whole, but, as my colleague, the member for Saint-Hubert explained, we do have some reservations about the mechanics of its application. I thought that Bill C-45 authorized the National Parole Board to refuse parole provided two conditions were met.

First, the convict would have committed a criminal act causing serious harm to the victim, and second, that harm would be related to a crime of a sexual nature. Naturally, I am not a lawyer, and with all due respect for lawyers I certainly do not think I am a lesser person for that, but I was under the impression that Bill C-45 was a proper answer to the motion. It would have been interesting to have the member for Brampton explain why Bill C-45 does not deal entirely with her motion.

Some of the people who talked to me about this motion, put by the member for Brampton, were concerned that it might turn a quasi-administrative body into a tribunal. I repeat that we support the basic principle of the motion. It is truly the duty of the Canadian society, and of all other societies, to protect children from possible contacts with pedophiles.

According to our present legal system, a judge may impose life-long sentences to offenders guilty of criminal acts. Judges already have that authority. Naturally, I believe we should exert pressures and stir public opinion on this issue so that the judges themselves impose sanctions like the one suggested by the member for Brampton.

Some people worry about the possibility that this authority could be assumed by a quasi-administrative body which was not a court. We all recognize that we must believe in rehabilitation. Otherwise, it would mean that some individuals are born bad.

I had the opportunity to air my views on the topic when we reviewed the Young Offenders Act. Personally, I do not believe that individuals are born bad, mean, devious, criminal or obsessed. I believe that they become that way due to a combination of factors, especially social, environmental and family factors.

The motion presented by the member for Brampton caused concern because historically, in our justice system, parole has been considered as the best road to rehabilitation. I understand the member for Brampton and I respect her point of view. I do not claim to have the answer. It may be that pedophiles, contrary to other criminals, cannot be rehabilitated, and I would have liked her to expand a bit on this point.

As legislators we must be aware that in our justice system parole has always been considered as the very best road to rehabilitation.

● (1355)

This is the reason why the Canadian Police Association, whose objectives are the same as the member for Brampton and

most legislators, namely to make Canadian society more secure, would have felt more comfortable with some kind of life parole. This way, we would recognize that pedophilia is a threat to be taken seriously, that it has nothing to do with homosexuality, that it is not a way to express one's sexuality but an offence, a criminal act which should absolutely not be encouraged.

Of course, as legislators, we can try to understand what turns someone into a pedophile, but our first duty—and again I want to thank the hon. member for Brampton for drawing our attention to this issue—is to protect the public. Would it have not been possible, as suggested by the Canadian Police Association, where pedophiles are concerned, to combine jail sentences with more severe controls and what we called parole for life, which requires offenders to report to their parole officers, live in designated areas and refrain from any contact with children?

Anyway, I support the initiative of the hon. member for Brampton as well as her motion and I thank the Chair for letting me complete my speech.

[*English*]

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley):**  
Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to and in support of this motion. I believe that my hon. colleague from Brampton is introducing an issue of great concern to all Canadians.

I know that when I raised my children I did not have to worry or I never gave any thought as to whether they were outside in my yard playing by themselves, whether they were at the corner park or whether they were at the hospital grounds playing. I did not feel a need to be watching over them every minute. I find this attitude has certainly changed over the last number of years. Parents are terrified to let their children out of their sight. They walk them to school and they sit and watch them play at a playground.

My hon. colleague from Brampton has indicated that Canadians want something to happen to those people who prey on children. I believe that what she wants is to get them and to keep them off the streets so that our children are free again to wander without parents watching over every move.

The government missed a golden opportunity with Bill C-45. It could have incorporated this in that bill. I feel that it did lose an opportunity there. I would hope when the committee is reviewing it gives consideration to the concern that has been raised in the House this afternoon.

I feel Bill C-45 does eliminate the need to prove that sex offenders who victimize children have to commit serious harm to be considered dangerous offenders. I feel that is a good thing.