

Government Orders

I want to talk about why the members of the third party are concerned about this. If we want to take away the red herring of whether we include everybody or whether we do not include everybody, the clear fact is that what hon. members opposite oppose is the inclusion of sexual orientation. That is what they oppose. I want them to know that I applaud the inclusion of that term.

When I was a physician I saw many young men come into the emergency room with injuries from beatings inflicted because they were gay. Gay bashing in my riding is a favourite Friday and Saturday night sport when brave, macho males drive into town and identify men who are gay, or even worse, who they think are gay, and in bullying, frightened, drunken bravado afflict brutal harm on these people.

My son, when he was 17 years old, was coming home one night with a friend. He was waiting at a bus stop. Because he was with a male colleague who was in his class they were beaten badly. They were called faggots. Were it not for the fact that six people came down the street and stopped it, my son and his friend would have probably been brought into the emergency room dead. That is what I talk about when I talk about crimes inflicted on people because of hate. When a person commits a crime on another because of who they think they are, they inflict it on all the people who fit into that group.

I am sorry if I am getting a little emotional. This stuff happens. It is real. We can talk in the House about what the law says, about the fine points, about dotting the *i*'s and crossing the *t*'s and fiddling around with every word. But in real life, in the real world, that is happening every single day.

It is not limited to men in my riding. Lesbians have been the target of these night time cruises purely because of their sexual orientation, purely for that reason and for no other.

Have we learned nothing from history? In the very beginning the crusades were religious wars. More recently in Nazi Germany people were targeted and beaten because they were Jews. Those acts of violence, which were sanctioned by governments, did not begin as a war; they began as individual acts of violence, which escalated to group violence, which finally reached genocide.

Have we learned absolutely nothing from the past? Do we sit here in these seats in the House of Commons confident that because we are living in a diverse and tolerant society, because we have people in the House who are of different colours and religions, that we have progressed?

I sat here and I listened to the member who spoke very piously about setting up special status for people and giving them special rights. The gays, the lesbians and the bisexuals in my riding and in Canada have special rights all right. They have the right to be

beaten up every Friday and Saturday night, to be denied the right to work, the right to live, the right to walk down a street, to go to a movie and to enjoy the things which members in the House take for granted.

• (1655)

What does the member who spoke so glibly know about hate and prejudice? The member is one person of a majority group in the House. He has status. He does not ever have to know what it is like to be vilified or discriminated against. I know what it is like. Just because my group is now accepted does not mean that I cannot speak for the groups that are not accepted.

Every day members of the third party get up in the House and bleat about how they are advocates for victims across Canada and how they speak for the rights of victims. Well shame on them for not supporting the bill. In doing so, they have abandoned the gays and lesbians of the country who are the daily victims of violence.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I come from a city in central British Columbia where we have a tremendous problem right now. Some young people that hang around together think it is fun to walk down the street and beat people. They do not take time to discriminate and find out what colour the person is. They do not take time to determine if the person happens to be a homosexual or take the time to check out the religion of their victim. They just beat people up.

Members of the Reform Party have been trying to say that the assaults they are committing are of no less severity than if they take the time to find out what religion their victims are, whether it is a homosexual or some other little group the government wants to put people into.

The member is trying to tell us that indiscriminate beating on someone just for the sake of beating, because they happen to like beating someone up, is not as severe an action if it had been someone who fits conveniently into some Liberal category. This is absolute nonsense.

I am led to believe that the member is apparently an intelligent person. How on earth can the member stand and tell us because a victim fits into some category the Liberal government wants to dream up because special interest groups got to it, that an assault in that category can be any more severe than an assault on any other category?

The problem is, when the Liberals were on their so-called fact finding mission, they took the time to invite every special interest group they could possibly think of to come and talk to them about the criminal justice system. They forgot one thing. They forgot to talk about Canadians as a whole. I use the word Canadian proudly. Everyone who lives in this country is a Canadian and is entitled to equal justice under the law no matter what colour or religion, whether they are homosexual, a Protestant or a Catholic.