

*Young Offenders Act*

than institutions which are retrogressive and punitive with regard to treatment. I hope the Solicitor General will take this amendment into consideration and withdraw the bill. I hope he will appoint a group of serious men to study this problem, men from all walks of life rather than those from a limited area. The problem should be studied in all its aspects, and consultations held with organizations and institutions across the country. Perhaps the group could go to England, Scotland and Scandinavia to study their schemes and then bring in a bill of which all Canadians could be proud.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not sure whether hon. members are satisfied with the form of the amendment. At first glance, from the point of view of the Chair it appears that this is a regular, reasoned amendment. Unless objections are taken to it from a procedural standpoint, the amendment will be considered as having been put to the House.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Carried.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, under this legislation, Bill C-192, it is proposed to discontinue the use of the terms "delinquency" and "delinquent" and substitute a somewhat more complex classification by the use of the terms "violation", "offence", "violators" and "offenders". I feel that legislation dealing with young persons should not be unduly complex and should be readily understood by parent and child alike. To discontinue use of the term "delinquency" would indicate a desire motivated in part to get rid of the existing stigma associated with it. It is my belief that a change in terminology will not resolve the problem; it is basically a matter of better education. I intend to use the term "delinquency" throughout my remarks as being the closest description of the subject matter of the bill.

It has been said that delinquency, whether juvenile or adult, is nothing more than a by-product or an expression of the system of values maintained by society as a whole. In this connection we should remember that the children who appear before juvenile courts constitute but a small fraction of the total juvenile population who are delinquent in one way or another. Who or what is to blame for juvenile delinquency? I do not know the answer but I can point out some opinions that have received varying degrees of support. It has been said that children become delinquent because they model their behaviour after delinquent adults.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nielsen:** This does not mean that there is an imitation of any particular person or individual but, rather, the growing child draws fragments of his model from various sources, that is, through imitation of individuals or groups who serve as models for his behaviour. Another aspect of this approach points up the prevalence in our society of values that tend to promote delinquency. It is said that as adults we are strongly individualistic, fiercely competitive, that we are childishly imitative and, above all, materialistic and that these aspects of our society all stress, in their achievement,

[Mr. Gilbert.]

some disregard for the welfare and the rights of other persons.

We tend to become more and more a nation of transients, and the continual movement of families from place to place can be especially difficult for growing children who must face a series of adjustments and readjustments. We are becoming more and more city dwellers rather than rural dwellers. We become more and more industrialized. As a result it is said that the large family, with the mutual dependence of its members upon each other, is passing from the scene. The thought is, I suppose, that the greater the sense of independence on the part of a young person, the more readily will he exercise that independence by flying in the face of accepted standards of conduct.

• (4:30 p.m.)

The mass communication media, television, radio, the press and motion pictures, are often seized upon as the primary culprits in promoting juvenile delinquency. Some people think that television, for example, may have some effect upon the way in which a young person commits an offence but that it has no effect in bringing about the state of mind in which he decides to commit it. Certain studies which have been conducted in the United States have purported to show that scientific investigation has failed to find any scientific proof of any major or general influence of crime, violence and horror shows on delinquent behaviour. At the same time, however, there is equally no proof that such programs do not have any connection or influence.

We all know how highly prized the television medium is by the advertiser—and by the politician, for that matter—to promote the sale of his product, and by many teachers as an aid to the education of children. If television is effective for advertising and teaching purposes in relation to young people, it must seem indeed to be a paradox that its horror, crime and violence content should not influence the mind of the child.

Some observers believe that a prominent cause of delinquency in the young stems from the emancipation of women. Of course, we all know that men are inclined to attribute most of the world's ills to this sociological development. These particular commentators are gallant enough to say that when the mother goes out to work in a planned and properly organized way, no harm is done; but when her working schedule is thoughtless and unplanned, the result may well lead to a substantial degree of insecurity and neglect in relation to her children.

Finally, in relation to the causes of juvenile delinquency there are some who take the fatalistic point of view that since the beginning of human existence on this planet the older generation has been critical of the behaviour of the younger generation. It is said that this chasm between the adult world and the youthful world is perennial and persisting and that although today, in essence, it is no different than it has been in the past, nevertheless at the present time the chasm is much more sharply defined and much more in evidence than ever