

Equality Rights

We are the children in the rafters,
 We are the babies in the park;
 We are the lovers at the movies,
 We are candles in the dark.
 We are changes in the weather,
 We are snowflakes in July;
 We are women grown together,
 We are men who easily cry.
 We are words not quickly spoken,
 We are the deeper side of try;
 We are dreamers in the making,
 We are not afraid of why.

The time has come for equality for all.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles Hamelin (Charlevoix): Madam Speaker, in rising to speak to Bill C-212, I am breaching a taboo subject. The word taboo was brought back from Polynesia by Captain Cook in 1777—

An Hon. Member: It was Captain Bonhomme!

Mr. Hamelin: And the word taboo meant sacred, forbidden, and so forth. At this point I would like to quote an old friend of mine—it seems he was a homosexual—whose name was Seneca. He always said: “We all run away from ourselves”.

I think there are some taboo subjects, Madam Speaker, which must be addressed directly today.

The purpose of today's Bill, which refers to sexual orientation, is to amend Section 2 of the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation, although it already refers to equal opportunity without discrimination on the basis of race, national ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, and so forth. And now they want us to add sexual orientation.

Madam Speaker, like most of the Members of this party, I believe that in Canada we must show the greatest possible tolerance and respect for differing views, but I would qualify this by saying positive views. In our society, we have passed so many laws that it has become a veritable disease. Our laws are merely a crutch for the freedom of mankind. Normally, we would not need laws. All the laws adopted by Parliament in the past, the laws we are adopting today and those we will adopt tomorrow, have been, are and probably will be, so many crutches to support the expression of our human freedom. We have a country where, unfortunately, although perhaps to a lesser degree than in other countries, the rights of the aggressor have overpowered the rights of the victim, where protecting the criminal has become more important than protecting the victim, where millions of dollars are being spent on criminals and nothing on their victims, because as far as justice is concerned, for instance, it is said that pain cannot be quantified, and where allowing rapists their rights means that the victim is publicly humiliated and made to suffer in our courts. And today, we have another piece of legislation, an amendment which this time concerns sexual orientation. Now

I think we have to speak out, in spite of our great respect for positive differences. Personally, I am afraid our society is becoming ultra-permissive. Sure, let sodomites, pederasts and proponents of bestiality become the custodians of our children! Why not? We are modern. We aren't afraid of taboos. Go right ahead! Let any idiot indulging in his unbridled sexuality get into the police force—we saw that in Quebec—and have fun with our children. Why not? It's a free country. We are a permissive society. Let's go! Let's be cool!

Madam Speaker, I want to say in the House today that Bill C-212, despite its virtuous appearances and good intentions, will not do. And it will not do because as it says in the text: — compatible with their duties and commitments to society. I do not believe that sexual preference has anything to do with rights and duties, at least as this would imply.

If we were to agree to this Bill tomorrow, any sexual pervert could use the provisions of the Act to defend the way he is and what he has already done or could do in the future in our society. I should say that I have a lot of respect for lesbians and homosexuals. I respect them. I have friends among them. I respect them as individuals and respect their situation, which can be difficult, but I am not ready, and I believe that a lot of people share my views, to take action which would give us a piece of legislation which could lead to the worst of abuses.

We also hold myths such as that of the honourable thief. Some may smile, but it is rare in society to find thieves who are also honourable. It is quite rare. It is very difficult to find a Robin Hood who takes from the rich and gives to the poor in the mob. Such ideas might sound wonderful, and the same is true about the notion, which sounds theoretically very easy to defend, that you cannot stop someone from working because of his sexual preference. What does this mean finally? What does this involve legally as far as our rights are concerned? It involves many things. I think that we should stop and no longer accept just about anything on the excuse that society is changing. I do not believe that we should do so now. Personally, I do not think that we should ever do so, or at least not now.

We should therefore show the greatest tolerance and respect for our differences, but by this I mean the positive differences which make Canada what it is because we, the Conservatives, want to protect what are our most precious assets. We want to be progressive, of course, but without destroying everything that was done before, and forgetting our traditional values. This is what it means to be a Progressive Conservative.

To conserve means to improve and to keep what we have best and to do so with tolerance, with the respect of our differences, but not with unbridled laxity, which only creates chaos and makes it difficult to teach our basic values.

Madam Speaker, at the risk of being taken for a dinosaur, I am going to vote against this Bill and I hope that no one will support it.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I have just arrived, and I was somewhat surprised at the high pitch of the remarks made by the Hon. Member who has just spoken to