

of its officers travel about on bicycles. These are just summaries of rather elaborate programs.

We also have the Winnipeg police department which has doubled the number of aboriginal members in the past two years. The current number stands at 49 with 8 more aboriginals entering training next week. They all recognize that we have to do more in this area.

The department now employs 63 female constables and has made efforts to encourage more women to apply. We recognize that is but a beginning. We need more representatives from our female population.

• (1950)

Substantial efforts have been made to encourage visible minorities to join the department. We have had some successes but we need to have more. In Winnipeg there has been an increase in the number of French-speaking services. These are all positive initiatives by that particular police department that often go unnoticed.

Let me briefly refer to some of the challenges the police officers face, such as youth crime and gangs. The police want amendments to the Young Offenders Act to deal with the growing problem. It is a serious situation and the police need our help and support. There is the issue of drug use. Many violent crimes and property offences can be traced to drug use and abuse. There is credit card fraud, and prostitution among 14 and 15-year olds or even younger is not uncommon. There is solvent abuse, gas sniffing, organized crime—very often mostly drug related—violent crime, sexual assault, wife abuse and property crimes. These are some of the challenges facing the police department and there are many more.

We have a police chief who once a week, I am told, goes out on midnight shift with his officers to see what it is really like out there. He is to be commended because he is the kind of person who is showing the leadership required today to go out with those who do the work to better understand what is needed out there.

I would be remiss if I were not to say that my colleague from Ottawa Centre wanted to congratulate the new police chief in Ottawa, Brian Ford, and commend the

police force of the City of Ottawa for the fine work it is doing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would simply summarize by saying that I am very glad that my colleague sponsored this motion, because for the first time in a long while we are talking about the positive accomplishments of a police force like this one and like those working throughout Canada. That pleases me tremendously.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my colleague's motion to recognize the labours of the police forces that protect all Canadians. I certainly thank the member for Mississauga East for her initiative through the Liberal tradition.

As a former citizen member of the Winnipeg Police Commission on which I served for three years I have seen first-hand the dedication of these people to their trusts as they perform community policing and face the challenges posed by youth gangs and even organized crime.

Usually we discount recognition for their efforts. They nonetheless persevere year in and year out to ensure that Canadians can walk down the streets and not be harmed, and drive home late at night and not be killed.

At night when most other people are asleep members of our police forces are alert, responding to emergency calls and maintaining order, sometimes at the risk of their own lives. They risk their own lives when they are sometimes infected with disease-contaminated blood as they attend to medical rescue and emergency situations.

I am at this juncture reminded of another bill, Bill C-333, now under study by a committee of this House. Members of the police force are truly threatened when they attend to emergency situations. This bill will provide for an infectious disease notification system to allay unnecessary anxiety on the part of emergency personnel. It will eliminate the need for an expensive follow-up and reduce the invasion of personal privacy decisions regarding the prevention of transmission of infectious diseases such as AIDS, hepatitis and others.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask members of this House to also support this other piece of legislation