

him that I wholeheartedly share his concerns. He stated earlier that what was needed was something besides speeches, that is action. But to introduce a positive element in this debate, I would like to hear the Hon. Member make suggestions to this House. If his party were in government, what concrete steps would he suggest and advocate, because he said indeed that action was needed besides speeches? Concerning, for instance, the cable distribution of pornographic films and so forth, I would like to know what concrete steps his Government, were they in power—

An Hon. Member: Impossible!

Mr. Tousignant: —would take specifically to avoid this.

Mr. Kilgour: Briefly, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for asking those questions. I am quite happy that he shares my concerns about pornography. It just happens that I introduced a bill, two weeks ago, that dealt with child and adult pornography. There is no secret about this. If he wants a copy, I can send him one. I can say very briefly that my bill is quite similar to that introduced by Senator Kennedy, from the State of Massachusetts, in the U.S. Senate, and I suggest without hesitation that Mr. Kennedy was no great conservative in the ethnological sense of the term. I think he now knows that pornography has become a problem so big that something must be done, especially with respect to child pornography. If he wants a copy, I will very gladly send him one.

Briefly, this illustrates three aspects of the subject. First, the film was clearly offensive to the vast majority of the people. Second, it has no scientific or serious purpose, and, third, for a citizen, this is something unacceptable; those are three arguments against adult and child pornography. Clearly there can be no right, as we now have in Canada, to involve a child under 18 in a sexual act, and it is my sincere hope that he can speak with the Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan), because action is needed now in that area.

Mr. Tousignant: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Hon. Member and I want to say that I fully share his concern. I also wish to take a few moments to congratulate him on his French which has been excellent these last few months. He has made tremendous progress and his French is really very good now.

However, to get back to pornography, I would like to ask the Hon. Member whether, considering Canada's geographical location with respect to the United States . . . Yes, I think we could easily oblige the CRTC to ban those programs if we really wanted to. But when we consider that fairly soon, our neighbours to the south will be broadcasting 100 or so television programs which we will be able to pick up here in Canada, what is Canada going to do about that?

Mr. Kilgour: Once again, I understand perfectly well that there is a problem with our neighbours to the south. However, not long ago I was told about a conference held in Great Britain some months ago with 25 countries participating.

Supply

Among these countries, 23 or 24 were terribly concerned about pornography. Only the United States failed to show any serious appreciation of this problem. But after all, we cannot allow First Choice to broadcast Playboy films on rape, for instance. The Hon. Member probably saw the fragment we were showed two weeks ago on rape and similar subjects.

I realize there is a problem with the United States. However, we must not grant a licence. We must tell First Choice that they may not broadcast films dealing with violence against women.

Today I happened to have lunch with someone who had just arrived from India. We talked about this subject and he mentioned that if the Indian film industry, which is very large, shows anything that represents an attack against women, the Supreme Court will not allow it to be shown. So in India, there is respect for women, in fact for both sexes, and I wonder why Canada is incapable of taking the same attitude towards people of both sexes, just as Indian and many other countries have done.

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I really would like to congratulate the Hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona on his excellent French and the progress he has made in the course of the years, and I also want to congratulate his French teacher. That being said—

[English]

—having said that, I now want to say that this very important subject dealing with the status of women in this country, which we all know is not what it should be, is not being treated by this House with the seriousness it deserves. I say this because as I look across at the Official Opposition, I see only five Members sitting there while this motion which they brought before this House is being debated. We have ten on this side, and it is not our day. It is not our responsibility to have Members here. It is shocking that the galleries are empty except for a few people at one end. It is shocking that there is no one here from the press.

Is this levity the way in which we should be treating this situation today? Is this the seriousness with which the Opposition Parties treat their own motion? There are three Ministers here who take these issues very seriously, as do the majority of Members in this Party, even on an Opposition day.

If the Hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Kilgour) is so concerned about pornography why, when this matter was before the Justice Committee last year and we were dealing with a Bill on child pornography so that children could not be exploited for pornographic purposes, did we not have the support of all Members of the Opposition? I know that the Hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona was in favour of changes at that time, and I congratulate him, but why were the other Members of the Opposition not supporting us at that time on that important piece of legislation?