

*Government Orders*

I wish I could convey what my wife and I went through in the next five hours before knowing that he would live. I would never wish that experience on anybody. You feel so helpless. You feel so devastated. It is your own son, your own child you have raised and you do not know what is at stake. We walked into the emergency room and I could not recognize my own son. I could not find him. He was so badly beaten that Fran and I had to have somebody point out who was our son.

No one can imagine what that kind of experience does to a mother and a father. So it has been very hard for me to quietly sit here today listening to some of the comments of the bleeding hearts trying to smooth over the serious problem we have.

If we as a House and with the authority do not address this, the history books will record us as absolving our required duty. I would like to stress that tonight. If I run short of time, Madam Speaker, please remind me because I could get carried away.

After five or six hours when we finally got the news that our son would live, I phoned the Winnipeg City Police to see what had really happened. Our son could not tell us. The sergeant pointed out that the two detectives on the case had worked all night and had gone home. I asked whether somebody else had been put on to make sure that the people were apprehended. He replied: "Jake, how can we do it? There are still 30 calls we have not answered".

We are being brainwashed if we do not think there is a problem out there. The violence on our city streets is unbelievable and it is spilling over to the small towns.

About one week after our crisis, a constituent wanted to know the real facts. We were at a coffee shop discussing what happened when all of a sudden, a young gentleman from a few tables over walked up to me and said: "Mr. Hoepfner, you do not know me but I know you. You are my member of Parliament. After I heard you talking about your son I wanted to tell you that I was one of those young offenders a few years ago. I paid my dues. Today I am married and I have a child. I will tell you, Mr. Hoepfner, I know how the system works. It is a joke. If you as a member of Parliament do not do something, my kid does not have a chance in this society".

It was as simple as that. He talked with experience. Why are we going in this direction?

• (1955)

A grandmother approached me a few weeks ago. She had been at her son and daughter-in-law's place and their young daughter who is in grade one was misbehaving. She was running around the house and her mother gave her a slap on the bum. The kid turned around to face her mother and said: "Mom, do you know you cannot do that?"

That is where the problem is. We have lost discipline. We have lost respect. If we do not address those issues we can pass all the laws in this House we want to and we will not correct the problem.

Why are we not going to fix it? It is very simple. We have to get back to the basics where morality is more important than the justice system. For 20 centuries we have followed the guidelines history has laid down for us: our fathers and mothers; respect the law; pay unto Caesar what is Caesar's, not what is legally possible to do or get around. This is why we have problems in our youth system today.

It was never brought home harder to me than when I was visiting my relatives in the Soviet Union in 1991 after the coup. We were watching television one night. The head of the KGB was being interviewed on why they were allowing all the religious literature back into a country where for 70 years they had burned everything that portrayed morality.

For 70 years that system had tried to do away with the family, with all the moral guidelines the western world thinks are important. Forty million people were murdered to impress the socialist system upon that country. The head of the KGB said: "If this country does not bring back morality into its society, it will never get back on its feet".

That is what is important to me. That is why I am addressing this House in this direction today. If we do not want to address the problem, passing laws for juvenile offenders will never solve it.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec):** Madam Speaker, as the critic for the status of women and multiculturalism, I am pleased to have this opportunity to outline the specific reasons why I oppose Bill C-37.

Once again, Canada is not respecting Quebec's wishes. Once again, Canada is trying to impose on Quebec legislation which does not respect its culture, its way of doing things and its attitude toward children. A new federal law will go against the collective will of Quebec. The current opinion in Quebec is that the justice minister's proposed amendments to the Young Offenders Act must be rejected. Those who work directly with young people, the psychoeducators, criminologists and specialized lawyers, and those who work indirectly with them, the members of the National Assembly, are unanimous in their condemnation of the proposals we are debating today. Liberals and PQ members in Quebec are in agreement. This is not a whim.

Over the years, Quebec has developed its own approach, one which has proven successful. The rate of juvenile delinquency in the province is the second lowest in Canada, after peace-loving Prince Edward Island. Our approach focusses on minimizing detention. The detention rate for young offenders in Quebec is