

The Royal Assent

106, an Act to amend the Young Offenders Act, the Criminal Code, the Penitentiary Act and the Prisons and Reformatories Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate at third reading stage of Bill C-106. There are very important amendments contained in Bill C-106. Before speaking to the amendments which have been adopted, some of the amendments which we in the New Democratic Party believe should have been included in this legislation and some concerns about the juvenile justice system generally, I want to note that we are pleased that the Minister did not knuckle under to those who argued that we should abandon the fundamental philosophy underlying the Young Offenders Act.

There were those who argued that we should reduce the upper age under the Young Offenders Act from 18 to 16. That would have the effect of putting even more 16 and 17 year olds into the adult correctional system. The failures of that system are such that we would not want to inflict that on our young people. I might note that at the time of the adoption of the Young Offenders Act—Mr. Speaker, I hear knocking at the door.

● (1700)

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[Translation]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Acting Speaker (Mr. Davis) with the House went up to the Senate Chamber.

And being returned:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate Chamber the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the Royal Assent to the following bills.

Bill C-107, An Act to implement the United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards—Chapter No. 21.

Bill C-108, An Act relating to commercial arbitration—Chapter No. 22.

Bill C-110, An Act to approve, give effect to and declare valid certain agreements between the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, Reed Inc., Great Lakes Forest Products Ltd., the Islington Indian Band and the Grassy Narrows Indian Band—Chapter No. 23.

Bill C-109, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act—Chapter No. 24.

Bill C-86, An Act to amend the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act—Chapter No. 25.

Bill C-91, An Act to establish the Competition Tribunal and to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Bank Act and other Acts in consequence thereof—Chapter No. 26.

Bill C-93, An Act relating to self-government for the Sechelt Indian Band—Chapter No. 27.

Bill C-115, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Government of Canada for the financial year ending the 31st March, 1987—Chapter No. 28.

Bill S-7, An Act to amend the Act of incorporation of Pine Hill Divinity Hall.

● (1710)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

**YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT, CRIMINAL CODE,
PENITENTIARY ACT AND THE PRISONS AND
REFORMATORIES ACT****MEASURE TO AMEND**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. MacKay (for the Solicitor General of Canada) that Bill C-106, an Act to amend the Young Offenders Act, the Criminal Code, the Penitentiary Act and the Prisons and Reformatories Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, after that temporary interruption I am pleased to resume my remarks with respect to third reading of Bill C-106, the Act to amend the Young Offenders Act. At the time the knock came at the door I was referring to the fact that the Government, in my view, quite properly resisted the calls by some to lower the maximum age under the Young Offenders Act from 18 to 17, or even to 16. As well, we were pleased to see that the lower age of 12 was not reduced even further. The suggestion that a child of 8 or 9 years of age should be dealt with as a criminal or as a young offender, as opposed to what is under the provisions of child welfare legislation, is certainly one that we would very strongly resist.

Finally I am pleased that the move to increase sentences under the Young Offenders Act was also resisted by the Solicitor General (Mr. Beatty). It is always an option for the Crown to seek a transfer in the case of a serious offence to adult court, but where an offence is being dealt with under the provisions of the Young Offenders Act it seems to me that a three-year maximum sentence is entirely appropriate.

I note as well that a number of the major groups, organizations and individuals that are particularly active in the field have echoed this support for the Government's decision in the Bill to maintain the fundamental philosophical thrust of the Young Offenders Act. Those groups include, among others, the John Howard Society, the Canadian Council on Children and Youth, and the Canadian Council on Social Development.

We in the New Democratic Party did, at the time of second reading of this legislation, introduce a number of concerns of a very serious nature with respect to the proposed amendments. In the course of discussions on the Bill I am pleased that I was able to persuade the Government to introduce four key