

Government Orders

problem. We do not need changes to sentencing provisions. They are already there but they are not being used. This is frustrating Canadians all across the country.

A section in the bill deals with the treatment of offenders of aboriginal descent. About two weeks ago a native Indian was convicted of sexual assault. At the same time he issued a death threat against his victim. The fellow went to court and was found guilty. That is a very serious crime in my book and would be considered so by most Canadians.

Even some of the bleeding heart Liberals across the way would agree with me that sexual assault is a very serious crime. Saying: "If you do not co-operate, I am going to kill you", is a very serious offence as well.

The person was found guilty. The evidence in court showed that the person had prior arrest and convictions for armed robbery. However, the judge with his creative thinking or because of political pressure or the influencing forces to make politically correct decisions, decided that instead of dealing with the crime as one that has a specified punishment in the Criminal Code, to have a sentencing circle. That is something new that is coming into the country when dealing with aboriginals.

The sentencing circle of elders determined that this man who was convicted of sexual assault and while assaulting his victim said: "If you do not co-operate with me, I will kill you", who had previous sentences for armed robberies which is a serious crime, whether your gun is registered or not, was given a sentence of one year banishment.

Mr. Thompson: Shame. Shame.

Mr. Harris: He was given one year banishment. He was to go out into a remote area for a year and be counselled by some elders.

I saw an article on that in a Halifax newspaper while going home. By the time I reached Prince George, B.C. it had hit the Prince George *Citizen* the next day. My phone started ringing off the hook and people were asking me: "Is everyone crazy out there?" I said to them: "No, just the Liberals".

• (2050)

This is the type of justice that Liberals seem to embrace. An individual is responsible for a crime which he or she commits. But Liberals do not believe in placing the responsibility on the individual who commits the crime. No. The Liberal philosophy says that it is society which is to blame. Let us penalize society. Society turned this person that way. They are not to blame.

The fact is there are provisions in the Criminal Code to deal with serious crimes, even the hate crimes which are pointed out in section 718.2. We have penalties on the books now.

I want to get back to sentencing. Section 718.2(c) states:

where consecutive sentences are imposed, the combined sentence should not be unduly long or harsh;

When I read that I see Pierre Elliott Trudeau and I see his former justice minister, the one responsible for section 745. It is the rallying cry of bleeding heart liberalism personified in the bill. Far be it for the courts to suggest that criminals should be punished for a crime.

Many Canadians are wondering about the existence of concurrent sentences. Why should a criminal convicted of several crimes serve his sentences concurrently so that he ends up serving a sentence for only one of the crimes?

This fashion of sentencing, consecutive and concurrent, is the number one contributor to plea bargaining, to deal making outside the courts. The lawyers get together, have a cup of coffee and say: "If you want to play golf this afternoon let's cop a plea and we will get this thing over with".

People read in the paper about someone who has been convicted of a serious crime and got a slap on the wrist. Most times the judge takes a bad rap for that because the lawyers had made the deal outside the courtroom before it even got to the judge. I have a decent enough regard for lawyers. They have to make a living too. We took the bounty off them in our party, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberals have it all wrong in Bill C-41. They are simply reacting to pressure from the interest groups which supported them during the election. The Liberals are famous for that. Mr. Trudeau probably did the best job at gathering together people from different categories and from different groups so that when the election came along they did not have to start talking to people individually, they just talked to the leaders and the rest of the people followed behind.

Our country is on a dangerous path. We would be negligent as parliamentarians if we dared to forget that the people of Canada have a right to decide what kind of society they want to live in. As long as the government refuses to listen to a broad spectrum of the Canadian people to hear their ideas and concerns, then anything it attempts to do with the criminal justice system is going to serve only the people who support it.

• (2055)

This is the underlying purpose of the bill. It is not to try to address crime in a meaningful way, but rather to placate the special interest groups that are giving the government a lot of problems right now.