

Adjournment Debate

what the government is doing to address those four issues.

I went on in my supplementary to ask the minister what he is doing about responding to a letter from Toronto City Councillor Chris Korwin-Kuczynski, Toronto Metropolitan Councillor Derwyn Shea, the MPP for Parkdale, Tony Ruprecht, and myself. We sent it in November 1992 to the current defence minister who was then Minister of Justice. To this day we have received no reply from that minister. I guess she was busy preparing for her leadership race even back then. To this date there are no programs based on the recommendations from the national symposium.

It is one thing to spend millions of taxpayers' dollars to call a forum in the city of Toronto where there is a high crime rate, make recommendations and then do nothing about it. I do want to congratulate the minister for listening to our recommendations about returning seized property and assets to local jurisdictions when there is a crime bust. I was pleased that we passed Bill C-123 in this House today. I do compliment the government for its action on that issue. It finally listened to what the people were asking for.

I hope the parliamentary secretary can highlight what the recommendations of this national symposium were and what legislation the government has in place now. I do not know why it took the government nine years to introduce legislation to make our community safer. I guess it is because there is an election coming up. All of a sudden, they are coming up with the legislation that should have been implemented four, five or nine years ago.

• (1705)

Mr. Speaker, you are giving me the signal that my time is up. I hope you will give the parliamentary secretary a little more time so that he can provide better answers than the minister did during Question Period.

[Translation]

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I will try to provide the most accurate answers to the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

I want to tell him that the justice system is in a good position to be a true leader in terms of improving safety of our communities and urging all sectors of our society to work together toward community development, while at the same time limiting crime to a minimum. The Minister of Justice is committed to developing a national strategy on community safety and crime prevention, in co-operation with the numerous governmental and non-governmental agencies which promote safety.

Last March the national symposium on community safety and crime prevention gathered officials from these organizations. The participants reached an exceptional consensus after in-depth discussions on issues such as violence, fear of crime, vulnerable groups in society, search for a balance, and the creation of communities and partnerships.

The participants developed a set of principles for a national strategy. First, this strategy should provide for a comprehensive approach, in that it should go beyond the traditional notion of justice, which focuses strictly on the offender, and take into account the impact of the crime on the victim and the community.

Second, the strategy should be aimed at the causes and not only at the symptoms. The discussions held reflected the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General on this issue. In Canada, as well as at the international level, it is increasingly recognized that poverty, unemployment, racism, sexism, drug addictions, and limited education and training opportunities are conducive to crime. It is also recognized that measures to improve these conditions will directly contribute to making communities safer.

In conclusion, this strategy should be based on a partnership which includes community organizations, police forces, local authorities, the governments of the First Nations, provincial and federal authorities, as well as non-governmental organizations.

[English]

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, some time ago I raised a question in the House about water diversions and bulk water transports being vulnerable or part of the provisions of the North American free trade agreement.