

*Measures Against Crime*

I do not pass judgement on television as such, but on a significant proportion of its contents. In so doing, I speak for every Canadian who clearly blamed that kind of program for the surge of violence, a radical one to say the least. In the context of a Gallup poll, Canadian pollsters ask Canadians to indicate the cause of the increasing rate of crime and violence among six possible factors. Fifty-four per cent of Canadians said television was the third most important cause.

Most human social behaviours are learned through observation and imitation. Because television is vivacious, true to type and ubiquitous, we may conclude that adults as much as children model themselves on behaviours they see on television. Indeed, a recent study by American sociologists showed that the greater the number of violent television programs a child sees, the more aggressive he can be expected to be. It is felt that a teenager just out of high school will have watched television for 15,000 hours, during which he will have witnessed 31,000 murders. These figures are not far-fetched. They were gathered in the course of a study by Dr. Katz, a psychiatrist, which was published at the 25th Canadian Psychiatrist Conventions held in October of 1975.

Violence on television has sometimes been rationalized in the name of morals and nothing less, on the grounds that the bad boy is punished for his misdeeds. The result is nonetheless that violence is depicted as a solution to problems.

During the summer of 1974, the CRTC Research Branch surveyed 55 entertainment programs broadcast by two Canadian TV stations. A total 108 violent episodes were reported in a 36-hour screening period, a frequency of three murders per hour. Significantly, the great majority of programs and violent acts telecasted were American production.

This is the crucial point: The influence of American culture, which is evident with the multitude of television stations brought in by cable, constitutes a threat for us. The economic factor is greatly responsible for this situation. It seems that programs bought outside Canada subsidize the production of Canadian programs by commercial networks. For instance, series like *Mannix*, *Cannon* and *Kojak* are bought by the American network at a cost of \$250,000 per program, while Canadian broadcasters—and all other foreign buyers—can purchase the same series for as little as \$5,000, which constitutes a certain monetary advantage.

So-called violent programs are mostly imported from the United States, as I said earlier. If we classify all half-hour segments of television programs shown in Toronto according to their country of origin, and the category violent, non-violent, sports and news, we see that 34 per cent of programs of all origins are violent and that most of them, or 68 per cent, come from the United States. Forty-seven per cent of American programs contain some violence compared with only 3 per cent of Canadian programs. The dramatic series shown on American television are oriented towards crime and violence. This choice of programs is therefore deliberate.

All this suggests, Mr. Speaker, that television can have a negative cumulative effect. It makes the population more concerned about the dangers of society than real life condi-

[Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier).]

tions would justify. Such programs constitute the greatest of all threats against human dignity and the respect of life itself.

This is why, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this House and the committee have to seriously consider the possibility of restricting the viewing of violent programs where firearms are used to solve conflicts during so-called family hours.

My aim is to awaken public opinion to the constant threat of television programs where violence is in some way made prestigious and justifiable, and we must stop promoting this misconception in a civilized society.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that I shall have the opportunity to present my amendment properly to the committee and during the report stage of the bill.

[English]

**Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** Mr. Speaker, before I open my remarks on the bill I want to say how shocked I am and how shocked is, I am sure, the whole House at the recent announcement of the government House leader invoking closure on this important matter which we are debating, a matter which is vital to every Canadian citizen and which affects the liberties of all Canadians. I am shocked and surprised at the announcement.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**An hon. Member:** They want to muzzle parliament.

**An hon. Member:** They are muzzling the Canadian people.

**Mr. Alkenbrack:** Surely it must have been authorized by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I do not know why the government is in such a hurry and is proposing to slough off and ignore these important items which we are putting forward in defence of the liberty and rights of most Canadian citizens.

I should like to open my remarks on Bill C-83 by congratulating my colleague, the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Skoreyko) on the excellent speech he made over a week ago tonight. Both he and the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), who spoke on the following Monday, have effectively stripped this bill of any semblance it might have had to what the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) called the government's major legislative initiative. I give my unqualified support to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Calgary North to have the gun control legislation separated from the totally unrelated material in the rest of this bill.

● (1730)

As the hon. member for Edmonton East pointed out, many of us could be placed in the position of voting against the bill in order to vote against a particular part of it. This is grossly unfair, Mr. Speaker—not only grossly unfair to members who hold those opinions but also to their constituents.

I wonder if the Minister of Justice really believes that there are people who are so naive as to suppose that guns leap out of their cases, load themselves, then rush out and commit crimes. It is not so, but that is what we are