

and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Lawrence (p. 9497).

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, this is a bit of an historic moment for me. Although I have had many occasions to speak in this House, this is the first time I have done so without there being one cabinet minister present—not that it will make any great difference.

Mr. Cullen: There are a lot of former ones though.

Mr. Malone: It will be a rather interesting Friday afternoon with no minister of the Crown in the House.

Mr. Knowles: There are a few hopefuls.

Mr. Malone: This young offenders legislation needs to be updated as there has been very little change made to it since it was introduced in 1908. It is important that we look at our young people and reflect upon the way we impose the law on that sector of society and make the necessary changes to both the writing and administration of it.

Although this legislation is basically good, there are some inequities which, with the agreement of the various parties in committee, could be done away with to make it a better piece of legislation. I want to reflect on the subject of young people and why it is timely that we bring about some changes to this legislation.

Those who watch the charts and graphs on the rate of crime in Canada in particular and in North America in general have noted a continual increase. An hon. member opposite shakes his head, indicating that this is not the case. I do not know what data he has looked at which indicate there is less crime today per capita than in former years. There are very few people who would believe that crime has decreased in North America.

● (1410)

I believe the legislation is important because I think the tendency toward crime will increase. That tendency will increase because of the advent of the silicon chip in this electronic age. The use of technology will take meaningful employment away from larger percentages of our society. That will cause frustration among our population and the crime rate will increase. Thirty, forty or fifty years ago and beyond there was meaningful employment for people who had low skill levels or intelligence levels. Such people would have difficulty finding employment today. One or two generations ago a person with an IQ of 80 or 90 could always clean out livery stables. Snow had to be shovelled. Such work is now done by machinery. Mechanization, electronics and superelectronics will, in the not too distant future, make it very difficult for a large part of our population to find employment. That phenomenon raises an interesting question respecting law and order and how to handle young people.

If I might digress from that point, I want to address myself for a few minutes to the North American phenomenon of

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adolescence. I believe adolescence has been created largely in Canada, the United States and the industrial nations of northern Europe and that in most countries of the world there is no adolescence. Psychologists have delved into the matter of the stress brought about by the change from childhood to adulthood. They have studied the stress among young people undergoing what is called adolescent change. They travelled to some of the lesser developed nations to find out why the change from childhood to adulthood causes stress, but in those lesser developed countries that change takes place almost overnight. In some of those countries two weeks after pubic rites people are no longer children. They go on hunting trips with their fathers, live under the rules and assume the responsibilities of adulthood. The interesting thing this team of psychologists found is that in lesser developed countries there is virtually no stress involved. Adolescents in North America are in limbo. They are not given appropriate responsibilities.

In our recent debates on the Constitution and when people appeared before the committee studying the Constitution the words often used in the committee and in this House were "my rights". We discussed the rights of women, the rights of children, the rights of Indians or native peoples and the rights of the handicapped. The legislation before us deals with the rights of youth, but I submit that this legislation is void of an adequate discussion of responsibility.

In dealing with the phenomenon of adolescence in industrial nations I remind hon. members that this country was settled by people who involved themselves in some phenomenal activities. The achievements of those people would hardly be believable today. Before he was 21 Lord Strathcona was making moves to set himself up in some very significant business enterprises. Ezra Eddy set up the E. B. Eddy Company. At the age of 15 he was very much an independent businessman. Sir John A. Macdonald articulated in law at the age of 16.

Part of the reason for our youth crime rate is that we have talked much about rights, but we have not created a climate which would allow adolescents to pattern their behaviour in such a way as to exercise their full responsibilities. If we look around the world and also consider our own earlier history, we can demonstrate that the assuming of adult responsibility is something which the majority of our so-called adolescents can do. If they were rewarded appropriately for responsible behaviour, we could have a much more mature society.

On a congratulatory note, the first comment I want to make about this bill is that it is appropriate that it should encourage adolescents to assume more of the responsibilities of adulthood. My criticism is that I do not believe the bill goes far enough. For example, I believe that the concept of retribution might well be followed with respect to youth. A youth involved in a misdemeanour or a crime should repay the debt he owes to society and to the person or persons against whom he has committed his crime.

Too often today we let youths and adults get off with mere fines or prison terms. In many respects that is an easy way of removing the sense of obligation which should follow a criminal act. I see no reason why offenders, both youth and adult,