

*Private Members' Business*

As a grandparent I am truly blessed for my wife and I have unconditional access to the loving relationship of four wonderful grandchildren. We can only imagine the pain that some grandparents must endure who have been denied access to their grandchildren.

In our case our oldest daughter is divorced. With open arms, we welcomed her and her three children to live with us. The joy of witnessing each unfolding stage of development is indescribable. The meaning of family continually evolves as three generations share the solving of problems, resources and time and do our best in respecting and honouring each other's needs.

The amendments presented in Bill C-232 are directionally correct. I bring to the attention of colleagues the case of the death of a parent or parents, parental abuses, and even personality conflict between parents and grandparents. The rights of grandparents are governed by provincial laws that can vary widely.

In British Columbia grandparents can apply for access under the family relations act. Alberta has no legal recourse for excluded grandparents. Quebec and only Quebec has enshrined the rights of grandparents in family law since 1981.

The use of courts is a lengthy and very costly process. It is obvious that provincial and federal governments must co-operatively harmonize family laws and the Divorce Act to bring grandparents into a loving relationship with their grandchildren.

For the sake of all those concerned, may co-operative effort result in positive directives as quickly as possible thus avoiding unnecessary costly litigation and unwarranted intrusion into the lives of parents, grandparents and grandchildren.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a piece of legislation that I look upon as an opportunity for the House of Commons to co-operate.

I listened to members opposite say that the bill is directionally correct. I have also listened to the bill being called knee-jerk legislation. Somehow, when I heard that term, my heart fell a little because it did not sound to me like a bill that was likely to get a co-operative view from all parties.

I would like to talk about the family in a general sense. Is the family in Canada under siege? We are treating families poorly.

There are popular myths about Canada and the family today. Popular myths say that most people prefer looser family arrangements than the old-time family ones. There are popular myths that say divorce does not really have that big an effect on children and that alternative lifestyles compete very nicely with the traditional family.

• (1155)

Another myth is that the one parent working and one parent at home model of family is old fashioned, out of date and some-

what demeaning to the partner who is left at home. Another says that day care is a really good or almost better substitute than care in the home.

I would like to explore the myths in very straightforward terms. First, 70 per cent of Canadians feel the traditional family is the best way to raise children. A very recent poll says that the popular myth that other forms of family recognition are as good is just not true.

The second myth is that divorce has minimal effect on children. As a counsellor I have seen the effect divorce has on children. Children are far more likely to blame themselves in the event of divorce. There is almost universally increased poverty after a family splits up. Interestingly enough children from divorced families are more commonly involved in divorce when they become adults.

Are alternate lifestyles as good as the traditional family? Alternate lifestyles are neither happy nor healthy. They often recruit youth to that end. Who could possibly recruit youth to an unhappy, unhealthy lifestyle? I could not. The traditional family produces the most stable, well adjusted, law-abiding citizens from all socioeconomic groups.

On the myth that day care is as good as normal family care, a meta-analysis of the issue was done. How does day care fare under the age of five? This meta-analysis compared different areas of childhood development: cognitive or in other words how smart kids were, social, emotional, behavioural and attachment to other individuals. This is summation of the results. It found that infants and young children who received substantial non-maternal care, that is care greater than 25 hours per week, were affected socially, emotionally, behaviourally and in terms of attachment to the mom. On all four counts the children were affected negatively.

New data coming to light indicates that day care outside the home is not as good as care in the home. The data is not coming from wackos. It is coming from individuals looking at data from the U.S., Canada, Sweden; all over the world.

As legislators how do we treat the family? As I sit in the Chamber a novice politician I try to look at how we treat the family. Divorce is pretty easy in Canada. We have poor maintenance agreements so a dad can disappear and not look after children he has sired.

We make welfare very easy for single moms to access. Our attitude as legislators seems to be that the state can provide whatever might be missing if the family breaks down. However, if the extended family is willing, able and capable to take up the slack, if grandparents are available, willing and able to take up the slack, we say line up. Line up behind whom? Line up behind social workers, line up behind family counsellors, line up