

waiting for the disposition of the question of whether he or she will be in youth court or adult court.

The young offender is going to be housed quite likely, particularly if there is sentence from an adult court, in an adult institution and subject to sexual and physical abuse by senior inmates of that institution, and will be subject to learn more about the criminal how-to-do than really that person should be learning.

We are not helping the situation. We are not looking at the individual. That individual is going to come back and is going to be subject again to the temptations of crime.

• (1530)

With the additional knowledge, I think we are likely to see a rise in the rate of recidivism in most of these situations in which that person will wind up breaking the law again and going back into the institutions.

That is one concern this bill totally fails to address. The other question is: Is it protecting society? Is it protecting individual Canadians? Right now there are a tremendous number of complaints about the Young Offenders Act. I remember when we had this bill, which was then named Bill C-58 before we entered into a new session and it was renumbered Bill C-12. This goes back to December. So the government has had a long time, nine months, of complete inactivity on this bill to bring it up to date, but has chosen to do nothing except bring forward motion 4A which protected its political neck with respect to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We had a witness, Mr. Maurice Rose, whose son was killed by a young offender on public transportation in the city of Montreal. He had applied to see the minister. The minister would not see him. He presented his case before the committee and he has circulated a petition throughout this country. He has on that petition now 800,000 signatures of people of Canada as to the inadequacy of the Young Offenders Act to deal with the problems of youth crime in our country today, particularly in the urban areas.

This has to be addressed. Certainly we want rehabilitation. We want counselling and we want training for the offenders. We want assurances that the public is going to be protected. What our party is recommending is that the length of the sentences be increased to allow for parole, to allow for an adequate period of time for counsellors to deal with the problems of these young

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offenders so that they will be able to receive help and so they will not come back in to society more bewildered, more apprehensive and more bitter than before they went into our institutions. Hopefully then they will not again be recidivist statistics, they will not be committing further crimes and coming back into these institutions.

We need these additional periods of time, first of all so that the young people realize that these crimes they are committing are not jokes. These are not childish pranks they are doing. They must know that they cannot thumb their nose at authorities, particularly law enforcement authorities. There will be the period of time, even taking into consideration parole, for these young people to receive the instruction and the counselling and the rehabilitation that they need.

It is absolutely vital that this period of time be increased. It is a question of doing the job in this case. It is a question of whether this act is going to be relevant or whether it is not going to be relevant. Unless we have adequate periods of incarceration, this act is not going to be relevant.

What we are seeing now, and the most diabolical and most frightening aspect of youth crime, is that it is now a front for organized crime. Organized crime members are intentionally using young people under the age of 18 because they know they are not going to receive a long sentence if they are caught, and that if they are caught and receive a sentence, their parole possibilities are tremendous so that they will be out on the street in just a few months.

This has got to be stopped. We have to stop organized crime members from using our young people for their own insidious and damaging purposes as far as our society is concerned. Unless we are going to be realistic about the terms of incarceration, organized crime is going to continue to take advantage of our youth and our society as a whole.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on this amendment of my friend from Cape Breton and on my own amendment which is grouped with this. Let me just set the context for the House and for the Chair.

What the government is doing is making it easier to transfer people to the adult court. It is making some changes in the bill that we have agreed on in terms of where people are incarcerated and in terms of probation and so on. The big difference between the opposition and the government is that the opposition is saying: