

*Private Members' Business*

mentioned the care and the understanding given by our consulates abroad to Canadian citizens in trouble.

There is a wide range of consular services being provided to the Canadian public. These services vary from a simple request for information about travel abroad to assistance in major crisis situations such as the recent Persian Gulf war and the Middle East crisis. However, consular services entail general assistance to Canadians in need, intervention with local authorities where appropriate, help in obtaining legal counsel when required, and checking on the welfare of Canadian citizens in prison. When a Canadian citizen experiences difficulty abroad when his or her health is affected, consular representatives will do the maximum possible to ensure that proper medical attention and care is provided locally. Families or friends are informed through the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa.

This settlement of medical and hospital bills is the responsibility of the individual and claimable through provincial health plans. As part of the federal government's consular awareness programs we strongly urge all Canadian travellers to obtain appropriate personal and health insurance to cover costs which go beyond provincial plans. As a matter of fact we are aware that most Canadian travellers do take this added precaution when travelling abroad.

It is therefore evident that the Canadian government does not stand idly when it comes to the protection of its own citizens abroad. We can clearly state that compared to other countries Canada is quite generous in this regard.

The issue which Bill C-310 addresses deals largely with the provision of assistance and protection to Canadian travellers abroad. The issue addressed by Bill C-310 in my view is one which does not fall primarily within federal jurisdiction. Therefore I would have to suggest that this bill should not proceed until there has been more extensive consultation.

I think the general idea behind the bill is excellent. I feel we should provide support to Canadians who have been injured, to the victims of crime abroad, but I do feel that more work needs to be done and in consultation

with the provinces to come up with a proposal. I have very mixed feelings about turning this bill down because I feel that there is merit to it.

It is the question that this is more appropriately done through other channels. I would encourage the government to continue to work with the provinces to bring forth a program that will cover the victims of crime such as have been mentioned and we are all familiar with.

**Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to rise in the House this morning to make some comments with respect to the legislation before us, an act respecting compensation for Canadian victims of crime travelling or posted abroad.

The explanatory note in the legislation states:

The purpose of this bill is to extend to Canadians and to permanent residents of Canada travelling or posted abroad the same rights to compensation as victims of crime that they would enjoy had they remained in Canada.

Let me compliment my colleague from Victoria who had the foresight and the industriousness to put together a private member's bill that reflects the feelings of the people he represents in the community of Victoria. With that in mind, it is obvious that the purpose of this legislation is to compensate on a parallel system those rights of victims that we experience in Canada.

I think it is best before we talk about compensation for victims outside Canada that we consider the procedures we have presently in place to compensate victims within the provinces of Canada.

My friend, the member for Delta, who just spoke previous to me, was quite right when he stated that compensation to victims is within the realm of provincial jurisdiction. First we should perhaps look at the procedure that happens in the province of Ontario with which I am most familiar. I am sure other provinces have similar procedures. An independent board is struck by the government of the province called the Criminal Compensation Board. Its purpose is to travel throughout the province to assess those victims who have been injured and have experienced pain and suffering as a result of crimes committed against either their person or against their property.