

Government Orders

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleagues from Moncton and Cape Breton—The Sydneys for the work that they have done in their critic portfolios, not just recently but over the last number of years, in dealing with issues such as this.

Surely one of the issues that must seize all parliamentarians and I guess all Canadians is the safety of our children. Clearly one of the things that constitutes an abuse or violation of the safety of our children is pornography.

The Liberal Party and my friends from Moncton and Cape Breton—The Sydneys have worked very hard and diligently on this particular issue over the last number of years. Indeed the Liberal Party policy position just a few weeks ago clearly indicated some of the things we felt should be done in the field of justice administration in order to try to rectify some of the abuses that currently are no longer acceptable and perhaps were never acceptable to Canadian society.

I also want to commend my colleague from Saskatoon. About a week ago he had a private member's motion before this place dealing with this exact subject matter. I said in my speech at that point in time that it was unfortunate that the partisan nature of this House does not allow for members to seek unanimity on issues even as important as this. It is an issue that I think all members of the House would agree has to be dealt with in an expeditious manner in this place.

Clearly one of the problems we have, as my colleague said, is that there has been a number of pieces of legislation which have been long overdue that were brought in by the government in the last five days that this Parliament sits.

It is very clear it is using these real issues, such as stalking, child pornography and a whole host of justice issues, to put pieces of legislation on the floor of the House in the dying days of the Parliament. It will probably not pass many—if any—of them and then it will run a law and order platform in the upcoming election campaign. If it does that then they should be condemned and damned for it.

We are talking about fundamental changes to protect our youth, our children, in this country. I do not know why these changes were not brought forward a long time ago.

We have heard from our critic, the member from Moncton, and we will hear from the New Democratic Party. There is a unanimity of opinion in this House that this issue has to be addressed. There is a unanimity of opinion in this House that a law dealing with stalking has to be addressed.

The difficulty is when the government opposite decides that it is much too busy doing other things and it is only going to try to showcase at the end of a Parliament some pieces of progressive legislation so they can run on it. It is truly despicable.

I hope that the government opposite is serious about pursuing this matter in a proper fashion and allowing the committee to hold quick but detailed hearings on it so that for once we can say that this Parliament has produced some legislation which has corrected some flaws in our laws and has protected the most vulnerable in our society and that is our children.

I think everybody would agree that people who exploit children for a sexual purpose and for profit are pretty despicable and low lifes. There is no question. To take the most precious of our resources, that is our children, and to use them in that manner for profit or for whatever other reason is simply despicable but it happens all too often.

• (1530)

I was just reading something about pornography and the increased availability of pornography. It clearly indicates that there are tens of thousands of children per year in Canada who are used by these unscrupulous—and the word I am thinking about is not parliamentary—individuals who sexually exploit young people and juveniles for profit.

There may be some problems with the bill and I am hoping that we will be able to deal with them quickly at committee. I am not the justice critic. I am just an individual who has real concerns because I have three children. This is the type of legislation that has to be passed.