

*Government Orders*

• (2045)

We must illustrate to them that there are certain things they have to abide by. The line is drawn and if they cross the line certain things will happen. If you are consistent and make sure it happens, in a short time you find that things start getting very mellow and they are very co-operative.

We have this precious sacred cow of the Liberals, called the Young offenders Act. This legislation bounces around all over the place, has never had any consistency. It just plays silly little games, depending on who they are, where they are, who the judge is, how he thinks. Everything is all a mish-mash. You come up with nothing, no standard at all.

I want to make sure the whole world understands when we are talking about legislation of this type, it is ear-marked toward a very small group of people. I spent 95 per cent of my time as an administrator of a school working with about 5 per cent of the population.

Some things are standard. Whether you are building a system or building legislation that would seriously look at young offenders, you have to be fair. We want to be fair. We are going to be firm. It should be made clear that it is going to be firm. It is going to be swift. Enough of this lollygagging around for two or three years before you even get to settling any issues. It has to be consistent.

If you want to have an education program, then why do you not throw it in there? You should make it loud and clear in the minds of these young people that if they cross the line, this is what will happen. Then make certain that is what happens.

I know that probably has a little bit too much common sense for some of the fellows across the way. Common sense never seems to enter into anything. They lollygag around and they come out with a bill that will change nothing.

They talk about their wonderful red ink book that makes promises to change things. They come out with this bill which does suggest changes. It is full of suggestions. I would say I really cannot find anything in it that says for one moment that anything is going to definitely change.

For example, they say that 16 and 17-year olds are now in adult court, except if the defence and the defendant can convince the judge he should be in juvenile court.

We made a big change there. We put the onus on the other end. If they think for one minute that every case of 16 and 17-year olds is not going to be challenged in court, they have another think coming. Every one of them will be. It will be a wonderful package once again for the lawyers. Boy, will they be busy. Members sit over there and say: "Oh, baloney." Oh yes, they will be challenged, you can bet on it.

If they had the guts, and of course they do not; if they had the will, and of course they do not, they would draw those lines. They would educate the young people. Let the schools handle the education, let them be taught they cannot cross these lines because crime is serious and they have to pay a penalty. This will be the penalty. Make sure it sticks with no ifs, no ands and no buts. You will find out that will work.

• (2050)

It works in homes, it works in schools and it can work in communities and countries if you have the will and the guts to give it a try.

If you want to take the old sacred cow and keep changing a few words and dancing around the mulberry bush like politicians are so capable of doing, and if you want to try to impress Canadians that you really want to make things safer for communities, then you would heed a couple of things. You are not going to make it happen if you continue to only play and tinker with legislation.

I look at some of the things that they are suggesting, and they are only suggestions. It is very important that I should point out something that might be worthy of the trust of Canadians and the members of the House. When I look at this I look at one thing. This bill proposes maintaining youth offender records so they are more accessible to law enforcement officials during later adult court cases. That is a good idea.

I also see that they are going to make information available to certain people who ought to know about young offenders when they are in trouble. Believe you me, as a principal of a school, I would have liked to have known on a few occasions about some of the students that ended up in my place of education. It could have been of benefit to them as well as to others in the school, but because we were not made aware, there were some things that happened which were tragic to others and once again we ended up with victims. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt it could have been prevented if only we could have known.

The government and the minister stopped short. They want to make sure that a few people know about it, those who they think are important, but they forgot about the next door neighbour. They forgot about the shop on the corner, the convenience store. They do not think they are the victims. I would just once like to see some kind of legislation come from the government that would indicate to the rest of us that the most important part of any crime is the victim.

I have said enough. There is not much you can say when you send somebody to the hospital with a gash and they need stitches and you give them a band-aid. There is nothing more to be said.