

Criminal Code Amendments

[English]

I have learned in recent days that the Government is far behind in filling the existing vacancies on the National Parole Board. I was in western Canada last week and learned that there are some spots on the National Parole Board which have been vacant for over a year. I want to urge the Government to take steps to fill these vacancies or to renew the terms of office of the present serving members. The Government is indicating in this legislation that it needs more members on the National Parole Board. In that case, why has it not acted to fill the vacancies which have existed on the National Parole Board for over a year? One reason may be the new patronage provisions in the conflict of interest guidelines which were introduced by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). The National Parole Board was one of the commissions to which a relative of a serving Minister, that is, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark)—the sister or sister-in-law—was appointed as a member of the National Parole Board during the course of the past year. If the Government had in mind to appoint other relatives, it has been prevented from doing so by the new conflict of interest guidelines.

The Government has brought in new conflict of interest guidelines. It is now impossible for the Government to make an appointment like the appointment of the sister or sister-in-law of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. What I would like to know is why that person is allowed to keep her job after the conflict of guidelines are changed to prevent that type of appointment. The Government is saying it is wrong for us to appoint our close relatives to jobs like this. Why is it allowed to continue to keep someone on the National Parole Board who it would not be allowed to appoint under the current conflict of interest guidelines? To me it is a question of whether the Government is really committed to having tough conflict of interest guidelines and to seeing them enforced.

I very much favour the increase in the size of the National Parole Board. It has a lot more work to do these days not only because of the Bill which is presently before the House but because of the impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on the hearings of inmates' parole cases and on the appeals from the hearings of inmates' parole cases. Without agreeing, therefore, in advance—and I am looking forward to the committee hearings—to the whole machinery which has been introduced, which is a little different from the machinery I introduced when I was Solicitor General, I am in favour of this type of constraint on mandatory supervision. We look forward to seeing how it is going to work and to an improved system of criminal justice.

● (1130)

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-67 and Bill C-68 have been grouped together for debate. They will be referred to a legislative committee at the same time.

Bill C-67 is An Act to amend the Parole Act and the Penitentiary Act. These amendments will give the National Parole Board the authority to deny potentially dangerous and

violent inmates release on parole or on mandatory supervision. The Bill will make changes to the correctional program and conditional release, known as mandatory supervision. It will tighten this program for penitentiary inmates who are believed dangerous and could potentially commit another crime.

Let me give some examples of what is happening as a result of individuals being released when they should have remained in prison. In Brandon last year, a man twice convicted for rape was released from a psychiatric centre because it was illegal to gate or rearrest prisoners on mandatory supervision. Within five months this man stabbed one woman and shot another woman and her two children during a bloody rampage in Brandon, Manitoba. One can see that it is extremely important to tighten the parole procedures. As a result of the crime on the streets today we have now reached a point in Canada where women and children cannot go out on the streets.

I will give further examples of what has happened in Manitoba because that is primarily where some of the most bizarre cases have taken place. Parents will not be able to let their children out of their sight for a moment, even to allow them to take apartment elevators by themselves. There is too much risk in allowing their children to play on the streets alone. For example, a 12-year old girl was forced into a car on a Winnipeg street. She was found later, bound hand and foot, and left in a railway boxcar. Fortunately, this time the girl was unharmed when she was found by a passer-by walking her dog. She was not gagged by the person who abducted her and her screams alerted that passer-by. However, in another case in Winnipeg last year, a girl was bound hand and foot and, after being sexually assaulted, was left in a shed where she froze to death.

Winnipeg's tenth murder victim of 1985 was an 83-year old man who was assaulted and stabbed 16 times in his home. His body was found a week later. Two people are under arrest for that crime. Recently, a man out on a day pass picked up three teenage girls and forced them at gun point to remove their clothes. He tied them up and raped them repeatedly and left them bound in a field. Fortunately, due to good police work, this individual was picked up later.

It is reported in a Toronto newspaper today that a man is charged with beating a 15-year old girl. This man, who fell 18 feet while trying to jump from a downtown roof top to a tree, has been charged in the beating early yesterday of a 15-year old girl. The girl is in satisfactory condition in the Hospital for Sick Children. If 15 and 16 year olds cannot go out on the street, certainly we cannot allow our younger boys and girls on the street unattended.

The latest and most bizarre case in Winnipeg, which has extremely disturbed the people of Manitoba as I am sure it did all Canadians, concerns a three year old girl who was lured from her home with a stuffed toy. She died of massive head injuries after being sexually assaulted in Winnipeg. A 17-year old has been charged with the crime. The girl was found in a garage a few hours after the murder, clutching a toy that did not even belong to her. It is believed that her head had been bashed in with a brick.