

become more aware of the serious problem of child sexual abuse, Mr. Speaker. I gives me the shudders just to talk about it.

I know that my time is limited. The Hon. Member's motion proposes the establishment of an emergency hot-line for children. I would like to take a few moments, Mr. Speaker, to address the matter of telephone hot-lines. Many provinces have now recognized the need and are offering this type of service, as the honourable member, who is from British Columbia, must be aware. Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has a network of telephone lines. There are a number of hot-lines and crisis telephone services for children in Ontario. Alberta offers a 24-hour child abuse and neglect hot-line. Quebec also has a province-wide child abuse line.

By now, Mr. Speaker, members of this House and the Canadian people will be aware, or will learn if they don't already know, that the Canadian Children's Foundation has launched the "Kids Help Phone" to reach out to children in distress. With sponsorship from the corporate sector, this toll-free, national hot-line offers 24-hour a day, year-round service to children who don't know where to turn for help. The child's anonymity is preserved, and the Foundation is working closely with the provinces.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the federal government is currently taking action to develop measures to protect Canadians from abuse and neglect. In June of 1988, the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women announced the \$40 million family violence initiative. Again, Mr. Speaker, the ministry is cooperating with the provinces and the territories. A lot has to be done. Right now, we are trying to develop a long-term action plan and to make sure we all agree that sexual abuse and family violence must come to an end. It will take money and efforts, but you can be sure that I will pay special attention to this matter. I want to thank the honourable member for giving me the opportunity to address this issue.

• (1730)

[English]

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed to hear the response of the government to this private member's motion. I listened very carefully as she ignored the essential point being raised; that is, will Canada lend support to the UN

Private Members' Business

General Assembly debate on a bill of rights for children this fall. The response of our party today and for the last several years is that we will support the UN resolution and we ask the government of Canada to take the initiative in working with the provinces to see that this happens.

I would just take us back a little bit to understand the genesis of this debate. The Liberal Party has for years worked within the General Assembly to assure that children's rights are promoted and protected. It comes as a great surprise, though perhaps not, that this government chooses to talk about anything else except its international responsibility in a matter so fundamental to the future of our country as children's rights.

Back in 1959, the UN General Assembly adopted a declaration of the rights of the child. Included in this declaration were the right to affection, love and understanding, the right to adequate nutrition and medical care, the right to free education, the right to a full opportunity to play and recreation and the right to a name and nationality. That takes us back 30 years of fighting for this basic principle.

Canada was a signatory to this bill. However, the UN lacks the legal authority to enforce the principles enshrined in this bill. Hence children's rights in Canada were nothing more than a statement of principle. This is not to say, however, that policy and law-making in Canada did not take into account the welfare of children. We all know of the progressive legislation presented by one Liberal government after another since that time to promote the rights of children.

A private member made an effort in 1979 to present a piece of legislation. James McGrath, a Progressive Conservative member from St. John's East presented Bill C-204, which was then sent to a committee and was never enacted. This party across from me has some semblance of conscience but has not been able to pull itself together to do anything as the government.

Mr. Friesen: Who killed it?

Mr. Walker: It was killed by your party. The Canadian Government should take the responsibility in three ways for enhancing the rights of children. First, it should take the responsibility for working with the UN to ensure that this piece of legislation gets through this fall. The bill of rights for children has a number of principles which are