

Government Orders

The hon. member from the Bloc spoke about psychological violence. I hope I am not out of place, but I have to ask what kind of psychological violence occurred in the Liberal caucus when their leader, the Prime Minister of this country, used words to say: "You must do as I say and if you do not this is what is going to happen to you". This was said to grown men and women who were freely elected in a democratic election by the people of this country. What happens?

There are two types of violence. There is the physical violence, which this bill attempts to address and I think fails miserably, and there is the mental violence. I often think the mental violence is far worse because it precedes the physical violence. Unless we look as a Parliament at the causative factors that lead to bias, prejudice and hatred, we as elected officials are not going to be successful in dealing with the problem. If we begin to create those things that will frustrate me and frustrate my children by saying that they are not equal in the law with all other Canadians, we are on a slippery slope.

I go back to my childhood days when yes, the ethnic jokes were there and the put downs were there, but we did not mind. Why? Because we knew we stood equal before the law. As soon as that changes—and we can look at countries that do not have laws which allow people to stand equal before the law, where there is special status and special rights and privileges—we will see the anger, the frustration and the hate.

With respect this bill does not address those factors. If the justice minister feels that by introducing a category of groups of people who will receive special treatment at the hands of the court over people who are not categorized within those groups, I think it is wrong. I am also absolutely amazed that the justice minister, who portrays a great degree of intelligence, could bring forward this kind of a document. I cannot support it.

• (1640)

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am wondering, with unanimous consent, whether I could put a question to the hon. member with respect to his speech. I know that for his speech there is no provision for questions, but I am wondering if we could have unanimous agreement to put a question to him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the request from the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to the hon. member who worked very hard in the committee. In his speech he suggested that there were provisions in the bill that would give priority to people with brown eyes and blue eyes. He said that the bill might favour people with

blue eyes as opposed to those with brown eyes or brown eyes as opposed to blue eyes, that one would be in a more favoured position than the other. That is not correct. I would ask the member to look at this once again.

The bill states, for example, hate based on race. It does not state that any one race would have precedence over another. They are all equal. In other words, if the violence was committed against whites it would be subject to the provisions of this bill, as would violence committed against blacks or against people with yellow skin. No group is given priority over the other.

With respect to nationalities, it states nationality. It does not state English over French or English over Polish. It states religion. It does not state Jewish before Catholics or Catholics before Presbyterians. In other words, there is no prioritizing of any of the groups. They are all equal.

All races, all nationalities, all colours, all religions, all sexes, all ages, all mental or physical disabilities are equal and all sexual orientations are equal. If people were to attack heterosexuals they would be protected by the provisions of this bill as would gays and lesbians.

The member was in the committee when the Canadian Bar Association and the Barreau du Québec, very eminent lawyers, made that very exact submission. How can he say that the bill favours one group over another when it obviously does not? It is in very general terms and no one group is favoured over another. That was the evidence presented to us by the eminent lawyers who appeared before the committee.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, the intervention from the hon. member is appreciated but he misses the point.

My point is that there are categories. He has mentioned the categories. Inasmuch as I fit into that category, then I am protected. What happens if I do not fit into that category and I am assaulted? The member for Wild Rose asked that if he is attacked by someone who hates fat people, what category does he fit into? That category is not there. If I am attacked and assaulted because I am a member of a particular political party, which I am, where in the bill am I protected? I am not because that is an excluded category.

I understand what the hon. member is saying but that was not the point I was making. The point I am making is that as soon as we start to make categories we had better not stop because there is an unlimited number of reasons that people are angry and hate other people. Whether they are fat, or ugly or just simply irritable for some reason or another—

An hon. member: Or rich.

Mr. Ramsay: Yes, rich or poor perhaps. That is the point I am making. I thought my point was clear, but if it was not then I hope that the intervention made by my hon. colleague will help clarify it.