

*Government Orders*

There were other imperfections. Those of us on this side of the House were concerned at the tying together of the provisions relating to child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, and the whole idea of the stalking amendments to the Code, the criminal harassment sections. I am really not imputing motive to the government. I can only say that my own reaction to this was that I was concerned we might be trying to pit the rights and needs of women against the rights and needs of children.

I think everyone will agree with me that in general, women are the primary care givers of children in this country, not always and in every case but in the vast majority of cases. There is something in every woman, whether she happens to be the primary care giver of a child or not, that distresses us to see even the suggestion of the rights of children put up in trade with the rights of women.

Again I compliment the parliamentary secretary and the government on the fact that they were most amenable in general on a number of the amendments which made the bill palatable and passable.

We have to be on our guard when dealing with these areas and particularly the areas that go so viscerally to the way we regard ourselves as a country, think about the protection of the weak and the need for true equality and true justice. We must put these bills in their proper places and not make the mix too varied to make it unpalatable at a future time.

To get back to the stalking provisions in particular, we are talking about a bill that goes after what can only be called fears of injury and death in the minds of far too many women in this country.

One question I posed to a number of witnesses during the committee stage of this bill was whether any bill was better than no bill, given the criticisms of the bill previous to its amendment. The response from all but the most vociferous critics was that yes, probably any bill was better than no bill.

• (1225 )

I think we have a better bill than just any bill. However it goes to the root and seriousness of this problem that activists and advocates for women would say that any bill is better than no bill.

Let me talk just briefly about the criticisms of women's groups. I agree with my hon. colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby that the time was too short. I am going to articulate the criticisms made by women's

groups, many with which I agree and a few with which I do not.

However I have to say that I was disappointed last Saturday by the reaction of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and in particular its new president. I congratulate its new president, Sunera Thobani. However I think there is a difficulty that needs to be articulated here.

Feminism and the women's movement is not monolithic. We can disagree and we clearly do. There are five political parties in this House and there are feminists in four of them anyway. That was probably an unfair shot—

**Mr. Nicholson:** There are some in the NDP.

**Ms. Black:** Don't forget about me.

**Ms. Clancy:** I have not forgotten the member at all. She is the hope to my left. The point that has to be made is that within the feminist movement we do disagree. We disagree on process, even if we do not disagree on goals.

I was disappointed because good and hard work was done by members of all three parties to try to make this better. I do not think there is any question from the members of the committee, or from members of this House, that the work done in that committee was done by the participants in good faith.

I have to say quite frankly that having been a member of that committee when I heard the president of the National Action Committee say that she was not going to support it my first response was that I had not seen the final draft of the amended bill even though I worked on it. Therefore, I wanted to know how someone who had not seen the final draft of the bill could be so certain that it was unworthy of passage.

I want to particularly deal with the criticism that it is similar to the American bills dealing with the stalking of movie stars. First of all, just because a woman happens to be a star of a soap opera or a film or is a famous woman does not make her any less vulnerable in a great number of ways.

I am thinking of that young television actress. She is no less dead because she was famous. A man came to the door of her house after stalking her and killed her on her own front doorstep. There is an actress who used to be in a soap opera in New York who can no longer work in the entertainment industry because of the actions of a stalker. She is in hiding because of what this man has done to her.