

Criminal Code

this improvement on the status of victims in the briefcase. If some opposition Member raised it, a government amendment on the subject would be brought forward, but if no opposition Member raised it the amendment would not be brought forward and this particular improvement to the legislation would not have been made.

I wonder what else there is in the Government's briefcase. I wonder whether, if we had been able to spend more time and effort, the Government would have done even more for victims than it did. The Government is not taking a reformist approach. It is very conservative, with a small c, to be dragged into bringing forward a reform like this which, in the City of Vancouver, in the constituency of my leader, means something. It covers a wrong which was revealed in an actual criminal procedure.

Since I talked about the research, I want to express my gratitude to the tremendous number of groups that came forward with amendments. They appeared before the committee and made very good suggestions. Allan Kaufman of my office, who is a lawyer called to the bar of Manitoba, was able to draft a lot of the amendments which are brought forward, many of which were accepted. I want to signal his efforts which were very much appreciated. He is heading, in the next two days, to Manitoba to seek a Liberal nomination in the Winnipeg area. The work which he did on this legislation in itself demonstrates a very considerable ability which I hope will commend itself to people in Winnipeg.

In conclusion, I regret the fact that three of the amendments in particular which I proposed and are on the committee record were not accepted. I think the Government recognizes that they would have been very significant improvements in the situation of victims in the criminal justice system. They were rejected without very much in the way of a solid explanation by the Government.

I hope there will be another day on this Bill. I commend it to our colleagues in the Senate. I hope that they will look at some or all of the amendments proposed by us in committee. I look forward to seeing the Bill come into force. I expect that some of the shortcomings of the legislation will be demonstrated as the legislation comes in.

[Translation]

Thus we will have the benefits and the reforms of the legislation and we will see what still needs to be done and what further improvements need to be made. It is regrettable that with the Conservatives, improvements come very slowly and only after pressure from the people, interest groups and the two Opposition parties. But I still hope that we will be able to review the situation of victims in the very near future in order to improve it further.

[English]

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to speak on third reading of this Bill. The

legislation was introduced by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) on November 5, 1987; got second reading in this House on November 19, 1987; was in committee from December until March; and was reported back to the House with amendments on March 30, 1988. Therefore, the Bill has moved along.

The New Democratic Party supports this Bill in principle. Indeed, we have tried to facilitate its speedy passage to committee with only one speaker per Party in second reading. Because of the Government's failure to consult with the Opposition before scheduling debate on Bill C-89 on Friday, April 29, we did not give unanimous consent to proceed directly from report stage to third reading. However, we are most certainly co-operating now in the speedy consideration of the Bill at third reading stage.

● (1530)

I believe there are a few of my caucus colleagues who wish to speak to the Bill because it is not often that we have the opportunity to consider in the House a Bill such as this, which deals with the victims of crime.

I want to pay tribute to Roland Penner, the former Attorney General of Manitoba who lost his seat in the recent election. He pioneered this kind of legislation when, in 1986, the Manitoba Government was one of the leaders of Governments in the world that were prepared to assist the victims of crime. It takes a lot of courage to pioneer such a Bill, but he had enough courage to put it through the Manitoba Legislature. He had enough courage to put through the sexual orientation Bill which Quebec and Ontario have also passed but the federal Government so far has been afraid to touch. I want to pay special tribute to Mr. Penner for his Bill on victims of crime.

Each year in Canada some 700 families are victimized by murder; 2,500 people lose a family member due to a drunk driver, and over 100,000 people suffer some emotional trauma from crime. Victims of crime often suffer twice: first from the crime, then they suffer from a lack of assistance and support in getting their property returned quickly.

It has been said in the House that victims suffer from crime and then suffer from the criminal justice system. I am a former Crown attorney from Vancouver and was a defence counsel for a few years. I value our criminal justice system and believe that it is one of the best in the world. However, I wish we had done more for the victims of crime. I think of witnesses who had to suffer through court cases and victims to whom not much attention or respect was paid.

If I have any regret, I suppose it is that we did not give enough respect and assistance to the victims. I am pleased that this Bill will change that.

We must also concentrate on the prevention of crime. I am pleased to see the advent of such things as Neighbourhood Watch programs, community and urban planning to ensure the