

*Government Orders*

people have to say from a social work perspective and at what people have to say from labour. It is mandated to look at what people have to say who are concerned about violent crime in our communities. It is mandated to take a look at what probation officers have to say, at what parole officers have to say, and at what the people on the street have to say. It is mandated to be open and inclusive by making its work more accessible and more understandable to all Canadians.

• (1225)

The member for Halifax indicated that she has always believed there is a need to demystify the law. Any of us who have worked in the law know that is the case. We can work in an ivory tower, prepare our mumbo-jumbo and talk to each other with our special language and never communicate that to Canadians or to our clients. If it is a mystery, it is somehow something only a specialist can deal with.

We are not content to have that carry on. The Reform Party talks about that all the time. Yet it criticizes us for making a law commission that is open, inclusive, and makes its work accessible and understandable to all Canadians.

This law commission will utilize innovative research, consultation and management practices by utilizing new technologies, something that, as good as it was, the old law reform commission was not very good at doing. It will be responsive and accountable to key groups that are affected by law reform through partnerships that build on existing knowledge and expertise.

This is an interesting one, because this again contrasts with what the Reform Party says and what it does. The Reform Party loves to talk to us about special interest groups. It loves to accuse the government of being captive to the special interest groups. What it means is that we listen to groups it does not listen to. Its special interest groups, like the American National Rifle Association or certain alleged wildlife organizations or the people who I like to call the gunners, are of course not special interest groups. That is not what Reform members mean; they can listen to those special interest groups.

There are lots of special interest groups out there. There are groups that are interested in the welfare of human beings. There are groups that are interested in benefiting mankind and their fellow Canadians. The law commission will give them a place to go, so they do not have to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars lobbying parliamentarians who are busy with other aspects of their work. It gives them a place to go and be heard. It also gives the individual a place to go and be heard as well. I cannot see how the Reform Party could object to that.

The law commission is mandated to be cost effective in its operations and in the recommendations and advice it provides.

The last law commission, indeed many of the vehicles that governments have used in the past to advise them, did not have to worry about budgets or about making recommendations the government could implement in a cost effective manner. We are mandating this group to do so. We are telling them to come to us with a project or a piece of legislation and think of the economic impact that will have as well.

I suggest this bill is part of good Liberal government in Canada. It is part of what the majority of Canadians elected us to do.

I will never forget what the little person from the Reform Party who ran against me said. When Reform became the government—quite a leap of fancy—it would listen to Canadians. Here we are providing the vehicle to not just listen to Canadians but to go out and shake them and ask them what they think about this, so that we can incorporate their views into our overall scheme. When we try to do that, where is the Reform Party? Politics as usual. It is here heckling and arguing but it has not bothered to take a look at what this bill really does.

On that point I would like to comment on something else I heard today, which is the use of what I would call fear tactics and fearmongering to try to scuttle a bill of the importance of this one.

When Reform members talk about violent crime, when they feed the myth that violent crime is on the upswing in Canada, they do their own constituents a disservice. It is not for them to create a false environment and then try to force the government to operate within it. It is not for them to set up a straw dog in order to knock it down. It is up to them, as a responsible third party, to focus on problems that actually exist in society.

There is no question that violent crime exists in Canada. There is no question that violent crime that exists at any level is unacceptable. However, it is wrong to suggest that it is growing and this government is doing nothing about it. It is also wrong to suggest that a law commission made up of people from every aspect of our greater Canadian community will do nothing about it.

• (1230)

This bill responds to Canadians. I compliment the Minister of Justice for what he said when he announced this bill. It sets out a real Liberal and a real Canadian attitude to law reform: "Canada's legal system faces complex legal issues that require more than a legal solution. Effective long term remedies lie in an approach that includes not only legal but social, economic and other disciplines as well. The Government of Canada believes that an independent, multi-disciplinary law reform body is essential to this process".