

These constituents of mine, Mr. Speaker, do not want special rights. I do not like the term gay rights, because it assumes that the homosexual community wants something extra. That is not correct. What they want is protection, tolerance and the human rights enjoyed by other Canadians. The whole basis of human rights legislation is that society should respect the diversity within it.

As George Hislop, a member of one of the homosexual associations, told the Constitution Committee in December:

We are not asking for more, we are asking for the same. We are asking for the right to be able to say, without fear, I am not heterosexual.

I think it is important to bring forward the fact that we really do not know how one's sexual orientation is determined. It is believed to be a combination of a variety of elements, biological, social, environmental. But we have reason to believe that once sexual orientation becomes part of one's basic personality, it cannot be easily changed. Nor can it be contracted, like measles. Freud, the father of psychoanalytical theory, wrote:

It is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function . . . many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals . . . it is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime and a cruelty too—

There are some people in Canada who view the issue of homosexuality as morally reprehensible. They are, of course, entitled to their view, but I do not believe that is the majority of feeling among Canadians. A Gallup poll conducted in June, 1977, suggests that 52 per cent of Canadians polled supported the extension of civil rights to homosexuals, while only 30 per cent were opposed. This was a statistically small sample, and possibly a more impressive measure of the prevailing attitudes is the long list of religious and secular organizations that have gone on record as opposing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. They include the Anglican and United Churches and, the government of Quebec which in December 1967 amended its charter of rights and freedoms to include sexual orientation as an unfounded motive for discrimination. In addition to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, provincial human rights commissions in four provinces, Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario, have recommended that the human rights legislation be so amended.

Despite this measure of support, there are some very real concerns voiced by many Canadians about extending human rights to homosexuals. One concern is the teaching of young children by homosexuals. But, Mr. Speaker, the issue here is morality, not homosexuality. As Mr. Hislop said before the Constitution Committee:

We are not asking anyone be given a hunting licence to prey on anyone else. We have a Criminal Code to protect people from unwanted, unsolicited sexual advances.

● (1600)

As a parent I am much more concerned about the fact that under our existing Canadian law there is no adequate protection for children from sexual exploitation by adults, heterosexual or homosexual. I am hoping that Bill C-53 which is before

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the House of Commons will give legal protection to young children from sexual advances by any adult. As a mother of two children I worry far more about whether my children pass their grades, whether they drink or smoke pot, whether any of us will survive their adolescence, or whether they will smash themselves in a car accident. The issue of their exposure to homosexual teachers is not on the top of my list of concerns.

I should add that the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) and other colleagues, such as the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Kilgour), are not wedded to this bill. There may well be other alternatives. The hon. member for Rosedale suggested that possibly the protection of homosexuals from harassment and discrimination might be dealt with separately in human rights legislation, rather than being added to the proscribed list. These are the concerns and issues which must be faced. These are arguments which are best dealt with before a three-party parliamentary committee which could hear both sides of these issues.

In summary I should like to quote the words of our colleague in the Ontario legislature, Sheila Copps, who proposed an amendment on May 15, 1981 which would include anti-discrimination in this area. Because of time I will abridge her remarks. She said:

I do not ask you to wear a turban to allow free expression of various religious beliefs in our province. I do not ask you to live in a wheelchair to understand that the disabled must get a fighting chance at jobs and accommodations in our province. I do not ask you to condone a sexual orientation different from your own. I ask you to consider that if we are to survive as a free nation we must cast aside all differences in guaranteeing freedom from discrimination.

That freedom from discrimination for all Canadians is the basis of the bill before the House today.

Hon. Bud Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost I commend the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney) for presenting this particular bill and endeavouring to see to it that at least the subject matter of the bill, if we cannot agree with the clauses in it or the format in which it has been drawn, is dealt with by the committee.

In this day and age despite the 52 per cent figure she quoted, although admittedly from a small poll, it takes a great deal of courage to raise an issue such as this. As she said, in the minds of some people it is considered to be morally reprehensible. I do not share that view. I share with the hon. member the view on the right of these people to have the same rights, nothing additional, as are available to all Canadians.

I had a similar experience to that of the hon. member for Vancouver Centre. I really did not give too much thought to the situation. Probably I was as guilty as the next person in telling homosexual or gay jokes, making fun of the limp wrist or the way we thought they talked; in any event, the stereotype. When I was practising law, an individual came to see me. He had been thrown out of his own home. He had gone to his church in the interest of receiving some guidance or help. He was mildly rebuked and in effect told almost the same thing he had heard from his parents—"Let us get you to a psychiatrist or a doctor; let us get this disease or sickness cured". He attempted to obtain a job, to be forthright and honest and to