

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Madam Speaker, does the hon. member receive any letters from victims across the country asking for improvements to the system? I would like to know how many he receives. We have about 500,000 now in storage ready to pass on to the Minister of Justice. They are all crying for changes to make things better.

• (1605)

Is the member aware of a 2.5 million signature petition calling for a pile of different changes? Is the member aware of the hundreds and hundreds of other petitions around calling for these changes?

Last, but not least, is he aware that there are literally thousands of people who belong to victims' organizations? Do you know why they exist, Madam Speaker? Because this government is not doing anything. All those people would like to go home, go back to work, get back to a normal life, including the Carpenters of the Carpenter group, the Stu Garriochs of Calgary and the FACT group, the people from the CRY group in Vancouver, the CAVEAT people from all across the land. They are trying to lead normal lives and they cannot because they are victims. They are joining together trying to get some changes.

They are trying to get changes to this warm, fuzzy little Criminal Code that was invented by the Liberals and they have not changed a thing.

Is the hon. member aware of these things? If he is, for heaven's sake why do the Liberals not wake up and do something?

Mr. McKinnon: Madam Speaker, I will respond in this fashion. The approach of the government has been to take under advisement the recommendations that are forthcoming from various groups.

It is a very important process to get that information to the attention of the government. I would think, as my colleague mentioned in his speech, that it is the most heart rending experience as a member of the House to hear some of the concerns that have been raised by these groups.

Let us not cherry pick and only look at the extreme circumstances. I am not alleging that the member is doing that but there are those who look only at the worst case scenario and use that as the reason for passing extreme kinds of legislation.

We have to look at both sides of the issue and the government is doing that.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite in his presentation referred to the idea of finding forms of punishment other than jail to act as a deterrent.

Supply

He said he is not in favour of this throw away the key approach to the jail system. Reformers are not either.

Reformers have presented ideas that would replace using imprisonment as a deterrent. We have presented many different concepts. Unfortunately I have not seen any of these ideas being picked up by the Liberal Party.

Some of the ideas we have presented are boot camps, public service, which is being used, corporal punishment as a possibility, capital punishment which can act as a deterrent and certainly will prevent an individual from murdering again. These are just some of the things that we have proposed.

We have proposed paying restitution to victims. We have proposed requiring the person who has committed the offence to pay restitution to the victim as a deterrent. None of these have been picked up by the government.

I ask the member for one example of legislation presented by the government which has put in place a deterrent other than jail so that we do not have to have this throw away the key approach to dealing with prisoners.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry, but time has just about expired.

Mr. McKinnon: I will be equally brief, Madam Speaker.

It would be out of my league to give a long list of things. I will give one example. I am only going back to my high school principal days where we actually had to bring together the victim and the perpetrator, going eyeball to eyeball. It was necessary for that to take place in our community with youth victims.

• (1610)

[Translation]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the Chair that I will be sharing my time with the member for Québec.

The Reform Party's motion borders on the ridiculous. I am no longer surprised by their manipulation of public opinion. It is pure and simple demagoguery. We have reached a point where their endless interventions are beginning to get on our nerves.

An hon. member: Sit down.

Mrs. Venne: It is not clear exactly what they want. I am being asked to sit down, but I have no intention of doing so.

Does the Reform Party want to change criminal law and the Criminal Code? Do they want to change the powers of the Minister of Justice, of judges or lawyers? Are they unhappy with judicial proceedings? Do they want to do away with the presumption of innocence? What is their intent? I do not know.