

Private Members' Business

the enormous expenses of maintaining a young person in an institution.

I do not know what it takes to awaken Canadians to this issue but we have to start with Parliament and it is for that reason I congratulate the member for Mission—Coquitlam. The more we bring this matter to the floor of the House of Commons, the more interest it will generate and then maybe some action will be taken. In the meantime, children are being exploited, children are outlaws on the streets of Canada and not enough action is being taken.

You can ask the question: What action can be taken? Well, first we have to identify the problem very clearly. Many people know about it. There is not a social worker across Canada that has not had specific experience. The problem is to gather all this information together and utilize the information to establish a program of action.

Just by way of demonstrating in a graphic way the nature of the problem, there is an organization called Victims of Violence. Gary Rosenfeldt and his wife are very much involved in it. They have been before committees of the House of Commons time and time again to push this matter.

I remember them pointing out that in Canada, about four or five years ago, we had a registry system for missing automobiles and vessels, but we had no registry for missing children. In other words, we in Canada were concerned with vehicles that were stolen and missing but had no concern about the children who had been reported missing.

At least we solved that problem. We now have a registry of missing children. We also have alerted police forces, which at times have not been as co-operative as I would have liked them to be in this area, to the fact that they have a role to play. They cannot ignore missing children. They should not wait for them to steal or commit some other criminal offence before they take some action.

Sharon Rosenfeldt wrote to me in October 1985 and said: "This country has foundations for women's rights, human rights, save baby seals and whales, but there is no help for missing children from their parents". As I said, some steps have been taken to remedy and rectify this situation, but a great deal more action is required.

I want to say in closing that I recognize and realize that the motion that has been put forward has in mind a bill of rights for children. I think that what is at the heart of that motion is the demand for federal-provincial co-operation in this area so we can have a legal basis to deal with the problem and then the contribution of public resources, private resources and any other resources to resolve this problem. As long as we have missing children on the streets of Canada, we will have people outside the laws of society and they will suffer, and all society will suffer.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to rise today in support of the motion of my colleague for Mission—Coquitlam that, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of setting up some sort of a grand alliance with the provinces to deal with the issue of a bill of rights for children.

This motion indicates a vision of a lot of the problems that relate to children in Canada, but it also relates a vision of the way Canada could be seen as an example internationally. The way that we treat our children and the kind of resources that are allocated for children can be seen as an example internationally.

As you are no doubt aware, Mr. Speaker, Canada has agreed to co-host or sponsor the Summit on World's Children which will be held September 29 and 30 in New York city. Canada, along with Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden, has agreed to sponsor this Summit on World's Children.

If the House agrees to pass this motion, I think that it has implications for Canada's international reputation. I would like to at least begin my remarks on that international perspective because passing this motion would send a signal to the world that we care about our children.

Much of the evidence, as has been stated in earlier addresses, would not indicate that we care. There is a lot of talk and very little action as regards the state of Canada's children.

Children are seen and not heard in the political context. Children are not voters. Children do not have political power. I think more and more Canadians are finding out what it means to be politically powerless. It is a sad statement of our own lack of resources that this