

*Government Orders*

tried in adult court and the court will have the discretion to accept or reject the application.

• (2040)

Although this amendment will be somewhat positive in nature it misses the point that we tried to raise some weeks ago. Sixteen and 17-year olds, given today's society and the rate at which our youth are maturing, according them the same degree of responsibility and accountability as an adult, should be considered adults and thus treated as such, particularly when it comes to criminal activity and when they become a threat to society.

The Reform Party had proposed increasing sentencing. I am therefore pleased to see that the minister has recommended increased sentences for first degree murder from five to ten years. We also recommended that amendments to the Young Offenders Act include a permit to publish the names of young offenders who have been convicted of any offence involving the use of violence, who have contravened any Narcotic Control Act or Food and Drug Act or who have been convicted previously of two offences.

Unfortunately Bill C-37 has failed to provide this amendment and it is this topic I wish to elaborate on today. I firmly believe that the publication of the names of young offenders is essential for the protection of Canada's innocent children. For example, a school principal may not know that one of his students had been convicted numerous times for drug trafficking. A parent may not know that his child is associating with an offender convicted of a series of rapes. The young man next door whom you have entrusted to babysit your children could be another Jason Gaumache.

Who should we be protecting, the vast majority of Canadians who are law abiding, hard working and caring people who will continue to be the building blocks for a productive society or the local high school's drug dealer or an unknown rapist in the neighbourhood? I do not think that is a hard question to answer. Undoubtedly it is these offenders who must be made known to our society.

We are not talking about the youth who makes a small mistake and comes in contact with the justice system on a single occasion wherein the best interest of the public may not be served by publishing the details. However, we do propose and firmly believe that in order to make community protection the number one priority, the publishing of violent youth offenders' names must not be prevented by law as it is today and is continued in Bill C-37.

The first penalty paid for committing a criminal offence against society ought to be full disclosure of who you are, where you come from and what you have done. This is completely exempted from this act and from the amendment.

The names of victims and the horrific details of the crimes perpetrated on them are open to public scrutiny but the names of the offenders remain a state secret. The young faces in Canada's courts and jails are like masks. They hide society's ugliest scars, scars that will fester if they are not exposed.

The Reform Party on behalf of our many constituents had asked the government to establish a registry of child sex abusers. The government has provided its typical response to a request of this nature. It knows there is a problem. It knows Canadians want something done about it. Therefore it has promised to study the issue and consult the proper authorities. In other words, the government is dragging its feet and in the meantime children will continue to be sexually abused and violently attacked by repeat offenders that the government is guilty of protecting by refusing the public the information they need to protect their children and society in general.

In their effort to understand the need for a child registry, Health Canada, Justice Canada and the Ministry of the Solicitor General commissioned a study. The federal ad hoc interdepartmental working group on information systems on child sex offenders prepared a discussion paper. Do you know what the conclusion of that study was, Mr. Speaker? We need another study and we need further consultation. However, contained in that paper is information which clearly indicates both the need for the child registry and for the publishing of young offenders' names.

I really have to wonder what purpose all these studies, reviews, consultations and more consultations serve. Are they to find viable solutions to problems we already know exist or are they a means to keep full the hands the taxpayers are feeding at the present time?

The ad hoc group reports that current research indicates that the development of sexually intrusive behaviour may begin as early as childhood and adolescence. The report goes on to say that statistics compiled on all violent crime committed against children in Canada indicate that young offenders, those aged 12 to 17, account for approximately 23 per cent of all accused offenders.

It is important to note that the same age group only represents 7.9 per cent of the Canadian population. Studies have repeatedly indicated, states the report, that sex offenders have one of the highest recidivism rates of any criminal group with an estimated 40 per cent reoffending within five years of release. Furthermore research examining the effectiveness of offender treatment programs has shown limited results.

I ask, does the right hand of the government know what the left hand is doing. Did the Minister of Justice not read the report of the federal ad hoc group? If he did, he would know that sex offenders reoffend. If he could do simple calculations he would know from the statistics that 23 per cent of sex offences in Canada are committed by young offenders. If 40 per cent of that 23 per cent reoffends, violent, sadistic acts will continue to be committed against the most innocent and vulnerable members of our society and the government could have prevented it. If it had read its own report and acted immediately on the findings of