

*Private Members' Business*

Canadians when they are overseas. This would be an extension of that principle.

Second, many countries that Canadians visit or work in have no criminal injuries program which would cover visitors from Canada. When crimes occur against Canadians overseas, that protection is simply not available to them. In some jurisdictions it is but in others it is not. It is a gap which should be filled.

Third, it is interesting that most of the provincial programs do cover foreign visitors coming to Canada. That principle has been accepted at the provincial level. The only way this gap can be filled properly is for the federal Parliament to exercise its jurisdiction and establish such a program or at least the framework of such a program that would apply overseas.

This bill establishes the framework in this way. It would authorize the government to enter into agreements with provincial agencies to administer the program. The bill does not propose establishing a new comprehensive bureaucracy at the federal level. The bill proposes that the responsibility of administering each particular case would be delegated to each provincial or territorial agency so that if someone were injured overseas and had a claim they would apply to their local provincial board or agency that administers the criminal injuries program in that province. In some cases it is workers' compensation boards; in other cases there is a separate criminal injuries compensation plan, a board that would administer the local plan, for example.

It would then be up to that board to adjudicate the claim based on the federal regulations and to pay the claim on a basis financed out of the federal treasury. The federal government would be responsible for the payments of federal claims to be decided under federal regulation by an agency negotiated by the federal government. It seems to me that it is a simple administrative system which builds on the system that already exists in Canada.

The federal government, under regulation, would have the authority to determine who would be entitled under the general rubric that any Canadian citizen or permanent resident in Canada—ordinarily residing here—would be entitled in general terms. The more

narrow definition of what type of crime would be covered and the circumstances under which a valid claim would be accepted would be established by regulation.

The provincial programs are more or less consistent as to the kinds of crimes that are covered. It would be a relatively simple matter to settle that for a federal program.

It is possible for all provinces to provide an upper limit on the amount covered. Generally speaking, the limits are relatively modest. It is important to appreciate the real role of the criminal injuries compensation program. It is in part to cover specific losses, although anyone who is travelling abroad with valuables presumably ought to be responsible for their own insurance.

There are items which cannot be easily covered by insurance, most particularly the trauma suffered by a crime overseas or anywhere. This is what criminal injuries compensation plans are primarily aimed at. In the case of the Hilliers, they are already suffering and continue to suffer from the trauma they received in that terrible tragedy of May 1988. Because they are of modest means they cannot really afford the continuing counselling that is necessary.

We have had another example in which recently a British Columbia resident was murdered in Mexico. The costs of bringing the body back home are beyond the family's means. That kind of cost could be covered under a criminal injuries compensation program. There will be other examples of a similar kind that could only be met, and at the provincial level are only met, by these criminal injuries compensation programs.

The underlying principle is really that of social insurance; the concept that we are a Canadian family and that we have some responsibility as Canadians for each other. The incident of crimes causing injury is relatively minor out of the millions of Canadians who visit overseas or for the millions of Canadians who are in Canada. When it happens to a particular family or to particular Canadian individuals, it can be the most dramatic, traumatic event in his or her life. Surely we as a Canadian family can organize ourselves to provide a minimum safety net, a minimum social insurance that not only can provide real assistance in dollars, but can say to those Canadians that