

*Government Orders**[English]*

We have to restructure our industries toward the new industries of tomorrow; environmental technologies, broadcast technologies, information technologies, health technologies in which we can shine so that added to our thrusts to train young people into apprenticeships, into post-secondary education that is geared to these new areas of excellence, we can find them work, we can find them an opportunity, a chance.

We have wonderful young people in Canada, some of them highly qualified. Most of our youth are wonderful people. Those that resort to crime and hopelessness are those that do not find a chance.

We talk about prevention and we say that we have not addressed prevention. Yet our Minister of Justice pointed out that we are going to create very soon a national council for prevention of crime. I know some will say another council.

*[Translation]*

We intend to consult with Canadians, provincial and municipal governments, police forces and communities with a view to developing, not a short-term, hastily conceived strategy, but a comprehensive, long-term strategy, one that addresses all aspects of crime prevention, including long-term rehabilitation.

*[English]*

There is a saying that if we cherish the child and give him or her hope then we do not have to punish the man or the woman in later life. I believe in this fundamentally. What we need in our society is to give our young people, whether they be 12-year olds, 15-year olds, 17-year olds or 20-year olds a chance. To believe that the world has not changed since the 1960s or the 1950s is to delude ourselves. It is a new world today with instant communications. The world is very different.

Sure, there is more crime. There is more crime in Canada as there is more crime in France or England, in places which heretofore were very peaceful. That is the way of today's world. In all of these countries there is one common link, lack of opportunity for young people and for adults. When despair and hopelessness set in, people resort to any way to earn a living, to acquire dignity of life. That is what we must attack.

• (1745)

To say that 20 years ago all was sweetness and light when we all went to bush camps and everybody was nice is illusory. Today I find we have more frank young people than in my generation. We have young people who are far more committed to society, to truth, to integrity, to the environmental cause than we ever were in my time. We believed that you had to cane children and use law and order in our families. Today it is a more

enlightened world where we rule by consensus and work together to try to form partnerships within our families, within our communities. It is a far more challenging world.

We have to resolve to effectively create opportunities so that our young people get back to work, find hope and dignity and then they will not have to resort to crime and violence.

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in this House to participate in the debate on Bill C-217, an Act to amend the Young Offenders Act.

Madam Speaker, I am against this bill. As you well know, criminologists have long argued that there is a wide gap between the public's perception of crime rates and the actual levels. Many believe that violent crime is a plague, in particular among young people, when the proportion of crimes committed by youths is very small. In fact, less than 15 per cent of all crimes committed by young people in 1992 involved violence. Despite the increase in the number of violent crimes committed by young people, most of this increase is due to minor assaults between peers, which, according to legal analysts, would not have involved the criminal justice system 10 years ago.

In April 1988, a study was conducted on the rehabilitation and social reintegration of 24 teenage murderers sent to Boscoville between 1968 and 1983. This study supports previous local and North American data on the typology, prospects and reintegration of young murderers.

It reminded decision-makers that, under certain conditions, these teenagers can be helped and become responsible and productive citizens.

Like other studies, the one I mentioned found that these teenagers have good prospects, that they do not commit subsequent offences and that their crime were due to circumstances and neurosis.

Young people charged with crimes have the right to be treated equitably under the law and enjoy special protection in this regard. Given their ages and maturity levels, young offenders have special needs that cannot be met in the adult system.

In fact, the bill attempts to reconcile the need to protect the public against teenage criminals by requiring them to assume responsibility for their actions with the need to protect young offenders' rights and help them become productive and law-abiding adults.

The media are often accused of contributing to the climate of fear. They tend to dwell upon spectacular and sensational crimes and to dramatize the vilest acts of violence reported on television, which apparently distorts reality, creating the impression