

*Private Members' Business*

In this instance, to some extent we are talking about locking the door and throwing away the key. That statement unto itself may sound unduly harsh; however, when it is rephrased it may become more palatable and perhaps better understood. Does anyone here believe that someone like Clifford Olson or Paul Bernardo should ever be allowed to walk the streets again? I do not think so. It would take a tremendous amount of convincing to dissuade me of this opinion.

The criminal must have served many years in prison. Treatment must have been completed and demonstrated to have had a positive effect. Remorse must be clearly demonstrated. Compensation of some kind would have to have been made to the victims of the crime by the criminal. Then and only then would I even entertain the notion of allowing the individual the opportunity to undergo further psychological assessment to determine the possibility of recidivism. This is not an issue of being harsh; this is a basic human issue about protecting the most vulnerable.

Protection of society will not be accomplished solely by the provision in the motion under debate today, but it does go a long way. Clearly, the preference would be to treat sexual offenders and to cure them of their illness. However, when this effort has failed we have a moral obligation to protect society. What we are debating today is whether the House sees this moral obligation; whether the House feels this moral obligation so strongly that it will make the moral obligation a legal obligation.

Some may ask why we need this legislation. Allow me through the use of an anecdote to demonstrate why this kind of legislation is necessary. There are times when my colleagues opposite are critical when we cite real life stories. However, unfortunately, they abound. They do represent a body of anecdotal evidence which cannot be ignored. If we can introduce legislation at little or no cost which will inconvenience few in society and by doing so save lives or prevent the commission of crimes, then we must commit to that effort. On that note, allow me to share with the House a sad story.

On November 18, 1984 Wray Budreo became a free man and every parent's nightmare. For days his face had been plastered on newspapers throughout southern Ontario. Budreo had a 32-year history of child molesting, including 22 convictions for sex offences. However, because he had served his full six-year term, there would be no parole or probation, no restrictions on his movements, no conditions for mandatory treatment. He was bundled into the trunk of a police car and spirited past the protesters who awaited him outside Kingston Penitentiary. I do not know if this man has reoffended. I pray that he has not. What concerns me greatly is that a known sex offender who was expected to reoffend was released from one of our jails.

I hear a familiar refrain all too often from people who doubt their own ability to shield their children from sexual abuse,

especially without being overly paranoid or obsessive. We must first know some of the facts.

Not every child is equally at risk. Offenders target especially vulnerable children: lonely kids, those with disabilities or who have difficulty communicating, youngsters with absent dads who may be looking for a father figure, and those whose behavioural problems make it unlikely they will ever be believed if they do speak up.

Of course, the biggest risk factor is contact with a potential abuser. Here the facts contrast with the headlines. The dangerous stranger is the exception rather than the rule. A 1992 Statistics Canada survey found that in cases of child sexual assault, 48 per cent of the abusers were a parent or family member. Another 43 per cent astoundingly were friends or acquaintances. Only 5 per cent were strangers.

• (1805)

Whoever the offender, the offence is clear. It is always illegal for an adult to engage in sexual contact with a child under the age of 14. It is also illegal for an adult who is in a position of trust or autonomy to engage in sexual contact with a young person under the age of 18. The law recognizes what adults know. Children can be manipulated especially by the people they trust. Whether they say yes does not matter because the adult is the one who must say no.

There are no national statistics on the number of children molested every year but whatever the figure, it is too high. It can only be reduced one child at a time. That means we must make an effort to deal with potential abusers by ensuring that dangerous, repeat sexual offenders remain in a place where they cannot threaten our children or society as a whole.

Even the term "potential abusers" is quite misleading in this context because we are referring to people who have already been convicted of a criminal offence but who we strongly suspect will have the potential to reoffend. Suggesting that dangerous offenders of this kind are only potential abusers gives them too much credit.

An important component of this debate revolves around the issue of our ability to rehabilitate the convicted sex offender. One of the reasons for this legislation is the widespread disagreement about the success or even the possibility of rehabilitating a sexual offender.

Two centuries after the birth of modern psychiatry there are numerous treatments for sex offenders but as yet no consensus on the results of such treatments. A forensic psychologist at the Oak Ridge Facility for the Criminally Insane in Penetanguishene, Ontario states: "We do not seem to be having much of an impact on sex offenders".