

Young Offenders Act

that many different opinions concerning what sort of treatment, guidance, care, custody or discipline should be given to a young person. I suggest in this sense the words are meaningless. Their first cousin is clause 7 which deals with the limitation on arrest without warrant. I would like to see that clause couched in different terms.

Earlier I mentioned the objections of the provinces to it. A strong objection has come from Mr. Grossman of the province of Ontario, who is their correctional services minister. He said that his department would have to provide about \$20 million worth of new accommodation if the federal bill were passed. He said, and I quote from a Canadian Press dispatch in the *Ottawa Journal* of November 18:

● (5:40 p.m.)

He said he doubted if Ottawa would help finance the extra training schools. It was a situation where the federal government drafts legislation the provinces have to pay for.

I think he is quite right. There is no financial help for the provinces in this legislation because I notice that we do not have the resolution that normally accompanies legislation when there is a payment out of the public purse. So, I assume that Mr. Grossman's objection is correct. He also makes the objection—and I referred to it in part earlier—that the bill labels children as criminals and that it would return the judge to the legal straitjacket of giving a determinate sentence. He said that research by his department has shown that legislation "should create a suitable framework for positive action to be taken on behalf of the child rather than against the child". Here I am quoting what Mr. Grossman is alleged to have said as reported in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* of December 10. So, on two separate occasions this responsible minister in our most populous province has voiced his objections to the bill. I suggest he has pretty serious reservations to it.

One would like to take a measure such as this, particularly one that is piloted by a rookie minister, and refer it to a committee so that the bugs in it could be ironed out and so that we could come up with a bill that commends itself. But once in a while we have to take a more drastic approach to proposed legislation and we have to reject it out of hand, even at the second reading stage, and say that it is so unworthy of the time of Parliament and its philosophy is so unjust that it cannot be accepted.

That is the reason my friend, the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), moved his amendment and the reason that I seconded it. I think the bill, in the words of that amendment, should not now be read a second time but the subject matter thereof be referred to a task force appointed under the Inquiries Act. Surely, Canadian youth not only expects better but should be given something better than what has been placed before us.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Loibinière): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the technical problems, I shall begin. I wish to speak on

[Mr. McCleave.]

Bill C-192 respecting young offenders, which was long in coming.

Indeed, the last legislation on the subject goes back to about 1929, if my memory serves me well. Nothing much has been done since and today in 1971, we have before us a bill which raises a general outcry from coast to coast, we must admit it, although it contains some good points.

Mr. Speaker, I should like at the outset of my remarks to make a review of the main provisions of this bill that I find especially pernicious, and whereby instead of making progress, of becoming more humane, of improving things, we keep on treating juvenile delinquents a little like dirt. I am sorry to say that, but that is the way I see it.

Under the existing Juvenile Delinquents Act a teenager up to 16 or 17 years of age, that depends on the province, can be found guilty only of juvenile delinquency. Now under the provisions of Bill C-192, a young person could be found guilty of any, and I quote:

—offence created by an Act of the Parliament of Canada or by any ordinance made thereunder—

I am now referring to clause 2.

Mr. Speaker, clause 2 puts in another light the problem of the young delinquent, who is practically without any protection at the responsibility level, insofar as the breach of any federal law is concerned. From now on, the young person who transgresses any law of Canada can become a criminal and be considered as such.

Secondly, the procedure of the court before which the young person will appear, once he is charged, will be under Bill C-192 much more formal, and here I refer to clauses 26 and 28.

Let us point out the presence of a lawyer to advise the young person and the elements of a real trial, including the cross-examination of witnesses, as well as the sentence set by the judge, if the latter finds the young person guilty of an offence.

None of these elements is to be found in the old act, but according to the bill proposed today, the young person, the young offender, will be put in the same overwhelming atmosphere as adults guilty of any offence under the Criminal Code.

The young person who knows practically nothing of life, whose experience of life will have been nothing but unhappy, of whom one often says that he is not directly responsible, finds himself in a world of adults where his future is at stake while he, very often, does not really understand how it is that he has ended up there.

We, adults, who want to help the young, give so much importance to their situation that they feel that everybody is against them instead of helping them.

What the young people need is not a court, not a cross-examination of witnesses, not sentencing, not a judge; instead they need more understanding, more human feelings and above all rehabilitation.