

about more comprehensive and needed changes to the act.

If the outcome of the member's work is that the government is to initiate a review of outstanding issues, focusing particularly on the principle of fairness which my friend has raised, I would suggest that this would be an indication of the close collaboration between private members and the government.

In fact, this would amount to a clear indicator of the positive effect that one member speaking for the rights of a private citizen and a constituent can have in changing the laws of Canada.

I know you are signalling me to stop, Mr. Speaker. I will finish with just two sentences.

Without being trite or waxing too eloquent, I would say that if the member's work proves to be a catalyst for reform in this area, he should be proud of his efforts and complimented by all of us who feel strongly about the important role each member may play in the political life of this country.

I want to end by complimenting the member on the work he has done and encourage him that even though time might run out on this particular measure, he take the occasion of the experience he has gained in this measure to work on the measure to ensure that the bill in some form does receive passage of this House.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to join in the second reading of the debate on Bill C-314, an act to amend the Criminal Records Act and the Criminal Code.

Many of our constituents have strong opinions on the way our criminal justice system should work. I welcome this discussion of some of the legislation that frames the system. I would like to outline for my fellow members and interested Canadians who may be following these proceedings some of the background that must be considered each time reform of the laws governing criminal misconduct is undertaken.

The acts that the hon. member for Mississauga South proposes to amend are only two of many interrelated statutes that have evolved to guide us in our daily conduct and to exact punishment when societal norms

and values are violated. The Young Offenders Act, the Income Tax Act, the Fisheries Act, the Narcotic Control Act, and the Official Secrets Act are only a sampling of the federal statutes that exist to control behaviour and to exact punishment when their provisions fail to deter.

In addition, there exists a plethora of provincial statutes and municipal laws of which one may run afoul and a good number of Canadians have been dealt with by the courts for their misdeeds. More than one in ten of our adult citizens has a criminal record.

It is important that the record shows who these offenders may encounter on their way from the commission of an offence to the determination of their penalty. In a typical case an individual may be arrested by a municipal police officer who, although operating in accordance with local policies and procedures, is ultimately answerable to a provincial government, which through the provisions of our Constitution Act exercises responsibility for the administration of the Criminal Code and related federal statutes.

The case may then proceed within the provincial jurisdiction to a Crown attorney who takes the facts to court. If the judge determines guilt and the sentence is a fine, probation or incarceration for less than two years, the offender may never encounter the federal sector of the criminal justice system directly.

Should the sentence be of two or more years duration, however, he or she will become the responsibility of the Solicitor General of Canada and will enter the purview of the Correctional Service of Canada and finally, the National Parole Board. Most of those convicted will at some stage encounter one or more voluntary organizations that often assist in the supervision of those who are conditionally released and other assistance in rehabilitation programs to prepare offenders for their reintegration into the community.

The system is not simple. From municipal to provincial jurisdiction, from the federal system to the voluntary sector, the whole process is most often begun when the police act on a complaint of a private citizen who has been victimized. Of course the media may show an interest in any particular crime or court case. It is important that we keep in mind the number of diverse players in the criminal justice game.