

*Government Orders*

Canadians and parliamentarians when deciding the difference between what is law and what is legal.

No member of this House can say the people of Canada agree with the Supreme Court decision that drunkenness can be a defence for violence or actions that deprive someone of their personal dignity. Conversely, no Canadian can understand how the Supreme Court can condone voluntary extreme intoxication or that voluntary consumption of large quantities of an intoxicant absolves a criminal of all blame for actions following drunkenness.

It is time to force the Supreme Court to decide whether it will continue to be a law unto itself or whether its decisions will follow the wishes of the people. It is time to send the Supreme Court a message that making decisions not accepted by Parliament or the people of Canada will result in change. That message can be sent today. We have no need to wait or build a body of evidence for or against extreme intoxication as a defence for criminal action.

All Canadians want those who choose extreme intoxication to be held accountable for their crimes. All members expressed outrage that voluntary extreme intoxication can be used as a defence for criminal action. Everyone but the Supreme Court it seems understands there is some responsibility that must be accepted for a criminal offence that follows when choice was not impaired.

Let us send a message to all Canadians that parliamentarians acting on behalf of the citizens of Canada determine what is right and what is wrong, what is legal behaviour and what behaviour must be punished.

The justice minister wishes to send this to committee to solidify the foundation to implement the bill. I believe he suggested something along those lines. The foundation for the implementation of the bill has been built by the people of Canada in their outcry against the recent decisions in the courts of Canada regarding drunkenness. This outcry was heard by each one of us in the House. The voice of Canadians has provided the strong foundation necessary to make the bill law.

• (1325)

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent for the following motion:

That Bill C-72, an act to amend the Criminal Code (self-induced intoxication), be now not only read the second time but sent to committee of the whole and passed at third reading this day.

I ask this so all Canadians and parliamentarians can send a clear and loud message that states no one can or will accept voluntary extreme intoxication as abdication of responsibility for criminal actions, and that intent of or criminal action is decided by all Canadians, not by an appointed few.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is there unanimous consent?

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Rock:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I will explain briefly why I do not agree to the suggestion made by the hon. member for Wild Rose.

The government is considering the possibility of referring this law to the Supreme Court of Canada for a ruling with respect to its constitutional validity before it is proclaimed into force. We may not do that but it is an option we are considering. Whether or not we do that, the validity of this law may be challenged in the fullness of time and may be considered by the courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada.

If this issue is to be before the court, it is terribly important the court have before it not only the statute but the evidence on which the Parliament of Canada opted for this approach to the issue.

When the bill goes to committee it is our intention to call witnesses who can speak to the nature—

**Mr. Stinson:** How long will it take?

**Mr. Rock:** Mr. Speaker, it will not take long.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I hesitate to interrupt. Not to diminish in any way the importance of the subject matter to members on both sides of the House, but clearly I do not want the House to engage in debate on what was raised as a point of order, although it might have become more of a point of clarification, which would lead to debate.

I understand there have been some negotiations between the parties and an agreement made. Going back to the member for Wild Rose, there was a motion put before the House. Unanimous consent was requested and has been denied.

**Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to support Bill C-72. I commend the Minister of Justice for responding quickly to the Supreme Court of Canada decision on this matter.

This is a matter of concern to all Canadians. It is clearly a problem that has been identified in the criminal justice system. It is appropriate the minister respond, as he has indicated, and preclude a person from being able to rely on self-induced intoxication as a defence.

It is also proper that the minister is considering the most appropriate way the proposal can be introduced into our criminal system. It would be irresponsible not to consider the constitutional ramifications of the proposal.

• (1330)

As we all know, Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about their safety, the safety of their families and the safety of their communities. Their confidence in the criminal justice system and its effectiveness in reducing crime rates have given rise to concern over the last few years. There is increasing