

Government Orders

I think that Bill C-31 deserves swift passage by the House of Commons and hopefully by the Senate. It is a step in the right direction. It is something that I would suggest to the extent that a consensus can be determined within Canadian public opinion. I would suggest to this House that there is a consensus that changes need to be made in Canada's extradition laws.

Mr. Speaker, you were in the Chair yesterday when I pointed out that the present law in Canada provides for more avenues of appeal, more judicial review for a fugitive who is involved in this procedure than Canadian citizens are entitled to if they are charged with a Criminal Code offence. I cannot believe that there are any Canadians who would agree that such a situation should be allowed to take place in this country.

Yesterday I indicated at the report stage that this is the first of two looks at Canada's extradition laws. We would hope to table in the House of Commons later this year further changes to the extradition laws. This was needed and it responded to legitimate concerns Canadians had on extradition law in Canada. I might add it also responds to concerns that have been voiced in this House by the hon. member for Peterborough.

In the speeches on the contraventions bill yesterday—inasmuch as this is public security week and there are a number of justice initiatives that are being proceeded with—I indicated that this bill we are discussing at third reading stage is in response to what many Canadians have told us, what petitioners to the House of Commons have told us. It also responds to the concerns of the member for Peterborough, and I think that is what a good Minister of Justice should do.

I did not get the chance to mention this yesterday but a number of members pointed out that the changes to the contraventions bill were in response to concerns, among others, from the hon. member from Parry Sound—Muskoka.

An hon. member: The Law Reform Commission.

Mr. Nicholson: The hon. member says the Law Reform Commission. I will digress for a second. I did not refer to the Law Reform Commission. The hon. member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys indicated that the Law Reform Commission suggested changes in the Contraventions Act in, I believe he said 1976.

I could say to him that if he believed in the Law Reform Commission his government could have done that in the intervening eight years that it governed Canada but I did not want to digress too much.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam mentioned that to him. It is one thing to say the Law Reform Commission is very important—and I believe their suggestions have been important—but it is quite another to say that we did not act on what they had to say for eight years when we had the opportunity.

I will say this about the present Minister of Justice. She has reacted in the Contraventions Act to the concerns of the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka and then in this bill, the extraditions bill, she has responded again.

Although it is not their nature to be cynical about some of these things, hon. members might say that I am saying this because I am a parliamentary secretary. I will tell them I am saying it because it is true. It is a fact.

This particular Minister of Justice has gone out of her way to try and accommodate the legitimate concerns that have been expressed within the House of Commons, within the committees of the House of Commons, and has responded to the legitimate concerns of petitions that have been tabled in this House. That is a good thing.

I think back to the gun control bill. I had a reporter stop me after that bill passed third reading and he said: "You know this was a very uncontroversial end to a controversial bill". It was supported by all except, I believe, 12 members of the House of Commons. You may ask how that would be possible, how something as difficult as that subject is for members of Parliament, would find a consensus like that.

I would suggest to the members of the House that one of the reasons we are able to come together was that the minister listened to the committee members under the chairmanship of the hon. member for Kitchener. She had a look at what members for all political parties had to say and she responded. She responded to what they had to say and came up with a better package, a package that protects Canadians.

It was the same with the Young Offenders Act which we recently dealt with. Those were amendments and changes that Canadians were asking for and I believe