

*Government Orders*

spent more time within what was called the home and if there was violence there the police and the courts rarely intervened. Also for obvious reasons, in the past, women may not have complained when they perhaps in hindsight had reason to complain. What has happened in part is that a situation has been brought to light and brought to Parliament and Parliament has begun to deal with it in this act.

There is a further reason why this law should be coming now rather than 10, 20, 30 or 40 years ago. There has been a change and it is the rising status of women in the Canadian economy, society and politics. This includes Parliament. There are more women now in the work force.

So they are out. They are in one sense more exposed or more vulnerable to such a thing as stalking. On the other hand, the stalking becomes more visible and more obvious and more capable of being dealt with than perhaps it was before.

• (1550 )

More women are now able in one way or another to act without their husbands. For example, when my wife and I were married in Quebec in 1950 we were advised by a friendly lawyer to get a marriage contract.

Otherwise by the then Quebec laws my wife would be considered a minor even though she is the same age as I am. She would pass from the tutelage of her father to the tutelage of her husband. She would not be able to sign a cheque if somebody challenged the fact that it was the signature of a minor, let alone conduct business or own property.

Although we had no money I was persuaded to settle a vast amount of money and property on her so that if she ever had to act alone she would have a sound legal basis for doing it under the 1950 laws in Quebec. Of course those laws have been long since repealed. They have been replaced with much more modern laws.

That is part of the change in our society. I remember about 35 years ago when a work mate—a man working in the factory where I then worked—remarked that it was too bad that a woman can just walk out of the house and leave her husband and get a job. Clearly he felt that the old days were better when she was forced to stay home in order to eat because she could not get a job as there were

not that many jobs for women. In the then modern circumstances of the late 1950s there were so many jobs that a woman could just leave her husband and walk out. My friend thought that was really quite terrible. I think he has updated his ideas since then. He and his wife are both together but I do not think he would say now what he said then.

I have given some extreme examples. What has been happening is that men at the present time tend to resent the fact of women attaining equality before the law, in employment, in social status and in social positions. I do not say that they have attained complete equality—far from it—but they have been moving up. Some men find that very hard to take. I

I want to say that it is a good law because it reflects a change for the better in our society. I do not mean the stalking is better but it is the change that has brought the stalking either into the light or into greater prominence. The rise in the status of women is in itself a good change.

This law will enable that change to go further still. I congratulate those especially on the committee from all parties who have worked on this law. I look forward to it being very useful to the people in Trinity—Spadina and to those in the rest of Canada.

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to stand in this House today to speak to Bill C-126, which is a bill that would make a criminal offence of harassment or stalking.

Although this bill is flawed it has my support. The proposed provisions of this bill prohibit anyone from repeatedly communicating with or following another person, any member of their family and anyone known to that person.

Such stalking would include persistently following someone, spending extended periods of time watching someone's home or place of work, making harassing telephone calls and making contact with one's neighbours or friends.

Section 423 prohibits intimidation which is generally defined as using violence or threats of violence against someone or their spouse or children, following or watching someone for the purpose of compelling them not to do something they have a lawful right to do or compelling them to do something they have a lawful right not to do.