

*Government Orders*

right across this country see right through this government's agenda and they have justifiably criticized in a very severe fashion the federal government's credibility and commitment to crime prevention. On one hand, the minister stands in his place today and says: "We are concerned and we are moving with dispatch and resolve", and on the other hand the government has cut \$2 million for crime prevention week.

It was a Liberal government that started this program in 1983. It has been extremely successful. Municipalities and police forces right across Canada have come to rely on this federal funding in order to increase the profile of crime prevention week, and here the government cuts it back, totally eliminates \$2 million in funding for crime prevention week.

I would like to comment briefly on the government's approach to criminal law reform. Over the last seven years this government has ad libbed its way through criminal law reform. It does not have an over-all plan to fundamentally change or reform the criminal justice system in Canada. The government is in a piecemeal fashion addressing problems, attempting to resolve problems, as they arise in the criminal justice system.

When one considers the legislation presently before the House, a number of bills are not here as a result of an initiative by the Government of Canada. The bills are before the House because the Supreme Court of Canada, in a decision or in a number of decisions, has said to the Government of Canada that it had better start acting, it is a legislator and it is essential that it deal with certain aspects of the criminal justice system.

For example, we have before the House on the Order Paper legislation that deals with the criminally insane. The law was struck down in May by the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court said to the Minister of Justice: "You have until November 1 to bring in new legislation in order for it to comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms". The government obviously had to act. It introduced a bill. It did not act quickly enough and then it had to go, cap in hand, back to the Supreme Court of Canada for an extension. Now the Supreme Court has granted an extension.

• (1240)

The point I am making is that in the area dealing with the criminally insane, the Law Reform Commission over 10 years ago recommended changes. There was a bill some four or five years ago that was considered, and yet nothing happened until the Supreme Court of Canada in

effect instructed this Parliament to act with regard to a law dealing with the criminally insane.

Regarding the rape shield law, another piece of legislation or at least a proposed piece of legislation, why is the government acting? Not because it took the initiative and said we have to reform this aspect of criminal law in Canada, but because the Supreme Court of Canada rendered a decision considered to be an inequitable result, a result that does not meet with favour with a great majority of Canadians. The government again has to act in this particular area.

With respect to matters dealing with young offenders, it is not because the government has taken the initiative and has said it wants to reform the law as it applies to young offenders, but rather it is responding to public concern. The minister admitted in his place today that what has sparked the introduction of this bill in the House is not the government's leadership, it is not the government's initiative, but it is because the public is pushing the government into acting and acting swiftly.

Some four or five years ago this Parliament was recalled in the middle of summer to pass Bill C-67, the gating bill, to deal with gating or issuing detention orders. Again, it was not because this government took the initiative and provided the necessary leadership, it was because the public was pushing the government to act. We on this side of the House have been pushing the last seven years for the government to act. I was on the justice committee, and I note that the present chairman of the justice committee is present in the House today. He was on that committee as well.

In the spring of 1987 we began a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system in Canada. The committee reported in August 1988. The title of this report is "Taking Responsibility". It cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. This report of the justice committee, which was tabled in this House, had 97 recommendations for reform. It was well received in the criminal justice community across the country. What has it been doing over the last four years? It has been sitting on the minister's desk gathering dust. The government has done absolutely nothing over the last three or four years with this expensive piece of work by the justice committee.

Now the minister comes forward and says: "Well, we want you to do it all over again, we want to send this matter back to committee". The pushing has not only