

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 9, 1992

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

VICTIMS OF CRIME COMPENSATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved that Bill C-310, an act respecting compensation for Canadian victims of crime travelling or posted abroad, be now read the second time and referred to Legislative Committee E.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I noticed the clock across from me has been sent off for repairs. It would be of assistance to me if I could be given a few minutes warning as I wind down to my peroration.

First of all, I appreciate the attendance of so many members in the House for this private members' bill. The bill would establish a federal criminal injuries compensation plan to cover Canadian citizens or permanent Canadian residents with protection if they are injured, while working or travelling abroad, as a result of a criminal act against them.

As the House will know, virtually every province has a criminal injuries compensation plan to cover its residents if they are injured as a result of a criminal act within the province. Virtually all provincial schemes not only cover Canadians who are injured within the province but also non-residents of Canada who suffer from criminal injuries within the province.

This bill is here because of two courageous people, Belinda and Mark Hillier, both of Victoria. Mark and Belinda in 1988 set off to Jamaica for what was to be their dream holiday. It was their first vacation overseas. They were looking forward to it. They went with friends.

While they were there they were the victims of a brutal crime. Two men got into their hotel room despite the security of the hotel in which they were staying. While in

the room the two men robbed them, beat them and repeatedly raped Belinda Hillier.

The next morning, with no money left, they were given only a modicum of assistance to get out of the country and left with their holiday, their vacation and their lives in ruins.

• (1110)

Four years later they are still trying to recover from the trauma of this crime. I had read of their plight in the local newspaper, the *Times Colonist*. I called them and we had a chat. The story emerged not only of the crime itself but of the failure of our society to respond to their plight.

As I heard their story, I began recalling others of a similar kind. When we did some research into it, we discovered a gap in the protection applying to Canadians. While there are criminal injury programs at the provincial level covering the victims of crime, there is no such plan in place for Canadians who are working or travelling abroad.

I have introduced this bill into the House for the first reading and it now comes before the House for second reading. If my colleagues will agree before this hour is over, the bill can then go to legislative committee for detailed consideration. I ask the House to give it that approval.

As hon. members will know, if enough members keep going past 12 p.m. Ottawa time, the bill drops to the bottom of the Order Paper. I would ask members to consider the possibility and agree with me that it should be moved to legislative committee. I believe, from my consultations with members on all sides of the House, that this bill is a non-partisan idea. It is one which has appeal to members on all sides of the House. It is an important concept because there is a gap in our legislation and it should be dealt with.

Let me offer three fundamental reasons why we should have a criminal injuries compensation program that covers Canadians abroad. First of all, we already provide at least nominal assistance to Canadians who are in trouble overseas through our diplomatic service. That is one of the important functions of the diplomatic service abroad. We provide innumerable services to