

*Government Orders*

tion, for the young person, to this self-proclaimed tolerant and generous society.

The message is quite clear when you read the bill, especially as regards that issue. It says: you are a petty criminal and we will make sure that you do not forget that. We will try to ensure that you are periodically reminded of that by appending this information to your school record.

If the provisions of this bill are strictly implemented, a young delinquent will spend more time in an institution, will have less chance of rehabilitating himself and, when he gets out, will be a branded person. The last ingredient of the minister's recipe is rehabilitation and treatment. We cannot say much on this because the minister certainly did not elaborate on this particular point. He merely said that, in the case of young offenders, rehabilitation and treatment will be used when appropriate.

I am sorry, but I believe that a 10, 11, 14 or 17 year old has a right to whatever rehabilitation or treatment is required in his case. This should not be a conditional but, rather, an unconditional provision in the bill. Once again, our views are very different.

The Minister of Justice told us he consulted a lot of people, including representatives of the legal profession, police officers, school authorities, provinces and many others. Among all of the proposed amendments, I wonder which ones were requested by the Quebec Minister of Justice, the Director of Youth Protection, the Quebec Judicial Council or even the National Assembly of Quebec? Which criminologist or sociologist in Quebec would want such repression? Who in Quebec asked for this kind of amendments?

If the minister held consultations, and I am sure he did, we can only conclude that, for the government to have come up with such a flimsy effort, as I said earlier, the Liberal Party of Canada must have felt unbearable internal pressure from Western Canada. To please the majority, they once again ignored the will of Quebecers, even though Quebec had made it very clear what it wanted. To be heard, the National Assembly of Quebec as well as Bloc members in this House have always maintained their positions.

As I intend to make myself clear, maybe for the last time, I will quote none other than the Quebec Minister of Justice whom the federal minister allegedly consulted. On May 4, Mr. Roger Lefebvre, Liberal minister in the Quebec government, said: "I think it is important for the federal and provincial governments to focus their actions more on rehabilitation than on repression. Young offenders need help and support to re-enter society. It is important not to condemn in advance all young offenders who commit violent crimes".

I wonder if the minister, a federalist I might add, is happy with the bill introduced by his big brother. Yet, according to the Quebec Minister of Justice, the message was made very clear at the federal-province conference. Mr. Lefebvre sums up his position in this way: "At the federal-provincial conference of the Ministers of Justice which took place in Ottawa on March 23 and 24, I had several opportunities to express the positions of Quebec, particularly on the proposed amendment to the Young Offenders Act. I also said that the Quebec government intends to pursue and intensify its search of durable and effective solutions that will meet the real needs of young people, and leave some hope for their future".

I would like to expand a little bit on that point of view because it is important to understand the inconsistencies in the current situation. I stressed that federal action must be respectful of Quebec jurisdiction and seek to reduce overlapping so that Quebec does not end up with higher costs.

• (1745)

I also indicated that experience in Quebec has shown that the present maximum sentence of five years is adequate for an overwhelming majority of murders committed by young people. The present transfer mechanism for serious offenses makes it possible to judge young offenders in a regular criminal court when their rehabilitation requires a long period of detention that cannot be determined.

And in the last paragraph, we have the explanation of the bill of the federal minister of justice. It is Mr. Lefebvre who says this to the National Assembly on May 4: "It seems to me that it would be more appropriate to make better use of current legislative tools for referrals instead of changing the rules, as some of the other provincial ministers of justice indicated during that federal-provincial conference". That is clear enough. Without having been present at that federal-provincial conference, I can say that Quebec City's concerns did not carry much weight in the decision of the federal justice.

I consider the Minister of Justice a progressive and I have a lot of respect for him but, unfortunately, I have to say that this bill is disappointing and dangerous. With due respect for the opposite opinion, I can say that the alarm has been sounded. Next time, what principle of our justice system will disappear? Who will take the rap so that we can silence and calm right-wing people? This bill misses the target and ignores the real flaws and the present problems.

I hear members of the government telling me that I am playing well my role of official opposition in criticizing a bill coming from the Minister of Justice. However, I will do more than that. Sometimes, I dream about putting myself in the place of a minister to try to understand his position, to follow his logic and to ask myself what I would have done if I had been in his shoes.