

rassed they put a detective cover on the outside of the book, which was a grade one primer.

I asked one boy of Indian extraction why he had not learned how to read. He replied that his mother had taken him and run away from his father, that while he was at school everybody called him an Indian and thought he was dumb and that he could not learn how to read. He cited an incident in which a teacher was talking about the abacus and he could not understand any of what was being said. The word was unfamiliar to him and the whole thing sounded like a new language. Apparently the teacher was using the phonetic system. That system, if taught properly, is a good one, but it does not compare, in my view, with teaching children how to read by the sight method or by a combination of both methods. The child went on to say that because he could not read he ran away from school and his mother and got mixed up with a bad crowd.

If we look in our prisons today, we will probably find that 50 per cent of the so-called criminals therein are there because they were ostracized, were slow learners or had some other defect which kept them from moving ahead in school. They became self-conscious and embarrassed and finally left the school system altogether.

It is sad when one parent takes the child from the other parent. The child cannot help but be affected by the court case and the fight as to who will receive custody. An hon. member to my left said that he came from a happy home. I came from a happy home as well. There were ten of us and we were poor. It was difficult feeding ten mouths during the depression years, but there was love and understanding in my family, and I am thankful for that. We never had to face the agony of taking sides between our father and our mother.

Later, as a teacher, when I learned there was a custody fight over one of my students, a big lump would come to my throat because this student would need help. The best help that could be provided comes from the parents, if they would just stop and think about the fact they brought this child into the world. Surely parents should wait until the child is of mature age before they begin venting their spleen on one another.

I had dealings recently with a case in which a mother had abducted her children after the court had given custody to the father. The court heard testimony, although the mother claimed that it was false. I do not know whether it was false, but the court believed the testimony. The mother kept tabs on the children as to where they were being kept and so on. She found out that they were being mistreated, abused and were not being fed properly. Her sister told me one evening that her torment was so deep that she had decided she would steal those youngsters and take them away so that she could look after them properly.

Later the sister of the mother phoned me and I told her to have the mother bring the children back, that she could only get into deeper trouble for defying the law even though she had run away with them to B.C. She did not bring the children back. She was eventually caught, and as a result she is now facing trial. Her chances of getting the children through court have been dramatically reduced. Perhaps the court will find

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under section 250.2 that there is a maternal reason for her stealing these youngsters. I hope so for the sake of the children.

But if the parents of those children would forget their differences and realize that they both have a responsibility to them because they brought them into the world, then everybody would be in a better position.

I congratulate the hon. member who introduced the bill. I hope it will cause those who are considering breaking up their home and those who are stealing youngsters, for whatever the purpose, to stop and think. Many youngsters are being stolen in our larger cities as well as our smaller cities. When a person steals a boy or girl in order to make money from the flesh of that youngster, the punishment for the offence cannot be too great. Imprisonment for ten years, five years or two years is not enough.

I hope the bill will help to prevent such occurrences and that we in society will do our utmost to prevent such things from happening. We must realize that at the base of many such occurrences is the excessive use of alcohol and drugs.

Mr. Maurice Bossy (Kent): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak for a moment on this most important matter, and, more specifically, on the area of international abduction. One such incident was brought to my personal attention by the Abducted Children's Rights of Canada representative in Chatham, in my riding. It has impressed upon me the futile complexity involved in securing the return of a child when removed not only from the home and the custodial parent but from within the confines of Canada.

● (1750)

In a situation where a child is abducted from his home and taken to another area of Canada the consequences are irrefutably traumatic. Consider, however, the implications of a totally different lifestyle forced upon the child and the hopelessness for the custodial parent in trying to ascertain its whereabouts, possibly in the context of a foreign culture and language.

Since the problem is one which has international dimensions, it is important to address the question of what measures can be taken not only within Canada but in the international area which will have the result of discouraging child abduction and effecting prompt return of a child who has been removed from his accustomed environment.

Ministers of justice have stated on a number of occasions that the abduction of children across jurisdictions must cease. As a result of these concerns the issue was included in discussions with the provincial attorneys general as early as October, 1975.

The then minister of justice asked provincial attorneys general for their suggestions as to how the situation might be improved by changes in federal law such as the Criminal Code. Because the matter of child welfare falls primarily within provincial jurisdiction, he also actively encouraged the provincial attorneys general to enact provincial legislation which would provide for mandatory recognition and enforcement of