

Government Orders

We have a serious problem of youth prostitution, and again I repeat, no preventive services.

How does a government morally justify a high level debate about some minor corrections in the correction services when in actual fact it avoids discussing the real problems that exist in real lives in every part of this country? Does anyone in this Chamber think it is by accident that a young woman or a young man ends up on the street as a prostitute? Does anybody think it is purely by happenstance or the uncontrollable lack of will that creates the number of young, poor people who end up in our institutions or on our welfare rolls? Is there anybody in this Chamber who believes that the very breeding ground for the kind of violence that we see in our communities is no one's fault, that it just happens and we do not know the reasons for it and we do not know what to do about it?

As a fact, this Chamber's antecedents, through many parliamentary reports, have time and time again laid out the problems in the corrections field, only to find time and time again that governments of the day have lacked the will to deal with the real problems.

When a child is without love and security from its own natural parents, it is the responsibility of the state, i.e., the rest of the community, to ensure that what can ever be replaced for that child must be replaced. It cannot be replaced in the classic orphanages. We have found out now what a failure they were. It cannot be replaced in training schools. The best effort is given through foster homes or alternate options for that child.

Do we really provide service that is adequate for children in those foster homes? When I worked as a social worker, the maximum case-load was around 80. Now we have social workers in this country with case-loads of 300, 400 and 500 children in foster homes. Do we really know what kind of service we are providing? No we do not. Is it predictable that some children will end up in crime? Yes it is. As a matter of fact, the last place to go is to the professionals who work in this field: the psychiatrists, the psychologists and the social workers. All you have to do is look in any community and the neighbourhood will be able to tell you what child is heading for trouble.

Who of us in this Chamber has not sat at our own kitchen table and said that if somebody does not do something for Johnny or Susie, soon they will be in

trouble. All of us have said it in our own communities, in our own neighbourhoods. We know and sense, as we see children grow up in the areas we live in, that some of those children are going to be in trouble and we also know that there are no real adequate services for them.

We do not supply the school districts with the wherewithal to assist services in the classroom. We do not focus preventive services right at the lowest possible level in the community. We do not ask the religious communities nor do we ask the existing public organizations to co-ordinate efforts toward prevention of crime through better child protection.

As a result of the difficult economic times we have in this country and the number of children who we are able to define right now as living in poverty, any one of us is able to say that a percentage of these children will indeed become our criminals in the next generation.

I want to read a quote from a Canadian Police Chiefs Association brief. This is the police of Canada making this statement, not a social worker, not a parliamentarian but the police of Canada making this statement and this appeal through their Canadian police association brief. "The answer to the crime problem is simple. We must eliminate poverty, hunger, prejudice, violence, drug use and mental instability. Additionally, we should provide quality education for all and stable employment to everyone". The Canadian police association brief.

Hardly a Liberal Party statement. Hardly a New Democratic Party statement. Hardly a statement by the Conservative government. This is not a political statement by a political organization; this is a statement made by those people who work in the front line of these problems every single day.

What has been this government's response? Window dressing. This bill is simply nothing more, as my colleague from the Liberal Party said, than window dressing.

In the case of my own colleague, the member for Brant, who has worked tirelessly along with other members on the committee to try to bring about some effective changes, there is a sense of great disappointment of the elephant labouring forth and bringing into existence a mouse.

Mr. Harvard: At least a gerbil.

Mr. Barrett: At least a gerbil my colleague says.