

Government Orders

would have been consulted. I suggest that it holds consultations on this subject, as part of the multiple consultations it is carrying out these days. I think that consultation in that area would definitely be in order, considering the implications for future generations.

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, in his speech the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm said that Bill C-7 and the Narcotic Control Act currently in effect contained many similar provisions. Could he please give us a few examples?

Mr. Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, yes, I could give a few examples. First I must point out, as I said in my speech earlier, that criminalization of drugs is nothing new as it was done in the Narcotic Control Act, but I will give you three examples.

Clause 6(1) of Bill C-7 reads as follows:

No person shall traffic in a substance included in Schedule I, II or III or in any substance represented or held out by that person to be such a substance.

Clause 4(1) of the current Narcotic Control Act says this:

No person shall traffic in a narcotic or any substance represented or held out by the person to be a narcotic.

Another example, clause 7(1) of the bill before us provides that:

Except as authorized under the regulations, no person shall import into Canada or export from Canada a substance included in Schedule I, II, III, IV or V.

The current Narcotic Control Act says this: "Except as authorized by this Act or the regulations, no person shall import into Canada or export from Canada any narcotic."

I could give you other examples. Clause 9(1) of Bill C-7 is the same as clause 9(1) of the Narcotic Control Act with regard to the commission in Canada of an offence.

As I said earlier, I think the idea is to update the legislation; however, we want, through this House, to send the message that the law we will adopt on food and drugs will be enforced in every part of Canada. And I am saying that, at this time, the Narcotic Control Act is not being enforced everywhere in Canada.

[English]

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to this bill.

The problem of the use of illicit substances and addiction and those who profit from it troubles the nation, troubles my constituents and, speaking as one who is elected to represent those same constituents, troubles me.

• (1340)

The use of illicit drugs has eaten away at the fabric of our society like a leprous plague. The illicit drug trade and those who live off its avails exact a heavy toll. They prey on that segment of our population that is most vulnerable, our youth, a prime target for those who deal in these drugs.

Drugs destroy families, they destroy careers, they destroy futures. They also destroy young lives. Perhaps most reprehensibly of all, while doing so they put cash into the hands of criminals.

In my practice as a physician I have personally witnessed many young people in families trapped in the cycle of drug dependency. I have worked with many of those families and young people to help them reclaim control of their lives. It is a difficult, frustrating and heart-rending struggle. I am therefore extremely sensitive to the consequences of drug dependence. It is not only a criminal issue, it is a health and social issue.

Realizing the need for action and recognizing that a widespread problem such as this requires a broadly based solution, the federal government launched Canada's drug strategy in 1987.

Canada's drug strategy is a comprehensive set of programs implemented with the collaboration of a multitude of partners and stakeholders. It was the first comprehensive step toward reducing the devastating and costly effects of drug and alcohol abuse to individuals, to families and to communities.

Canada's drug strategy was designed to address drug abuse in a balanced and co-ordinated manner. Emphasis was not only put on treatment and rehabilitation but it also addressed education and prevention.

Part of the strategy contains legislative components in the form of legislation intended to strip traffickers of their ill-gotten assets, legislation that recognizes the obligation of Canada as a signatory under three international conventions, and legislation that consolidates parts 3 and 4 of the Food and Drug Act and the Narcotic Control Act.

All components of phase 1 of the drug strategy are now in place with the exception of the legislation implementing the convention. This controlled drugs and substances bill is the final component of our drug strategy.

Canada's drug strategy is based on the recognition that we must maintain a balanced approach when dealing with substance abuse. Two hundred and seventy million dollars over five years have been dedicated to the reduction of use and to the reduction of supply.

The strategy allocates 70 per cent of its funds to reduction among users. This covers treatment initiatives, rehabilitation, education and prevention. The other 30 per cent is dedicated to enforcement activity.