

that there is a distinction between erotica and pornography, we would be proud to stand in our places and support legislation that reflects that policy. But I am not holding my breath, Mr. Speaker.

• (1650)

Imagine what the Government has put before us in this piece of legislation. I want to give an example of exactly what are the implications. An image of a man and a woman, two adults engaging in consensual love-making, will be illegal under the provisions of this Bill. Those who distribute that image or that video will go to jail. They will be subject to a term of imprisonment for two years. An image of two adults making love consensually and equally will be illegal.

However, another image of those same people, only this time the man has a chain-saw in his hands and he is brutally violating the woman, hacking her to bits with the chain-saw, an image of blood, gore, and violence, will be entirely legal under the provisions of Bill C-54.

What utter hypocrisy. What utter dangerous hypocrisy on the part of a Government which says that it is concerned about violence and degradation. It wants to say that if we depict adult sexuality it is a crime in Canada today, yet if we depict violence, murder, or illegal acts there is nothing wrong with it. What kind of twisted mentality is it? What kind of puritan, Victorian, repressive mentality is it that says that it is okay to show a man hacking a woman to bits with a chain-saw, but it is illegal and we go to jail if we show that same man making love to the woman? That is what this piece of legislation is all about.

How many Canadians have asked for that legislation? It was roughly 20 years ago that a former Prime Minister said to Canadians that the state had no business in the bedrooms of the nation. He was right, but what the Conservative Government would do is to take the state, not just back into the bedrooms of the nation, but into the living-rooms, the libraries, the museums, and the art galleries of the nation. To whom is it responding? It is certainly not the witnesses who appeared before the Fraser Commission.

[Translation]

As my colleague from Outremont (Mrs. Pepin) has indicated, many witnesses who came before the Fraser Commission asked for severe penalties for violence, degradation and child pornography. However, the Fraser Commission has recommended to make a fundamental distinction between pornography and erotica.

But, Mr. Speaker, what does a Conservative Government consider as erotica? Erotica is nudity, period. That's all. Incredible, Mr. Speaker! They have completely ignored the recommendations made by the McDonald Commission.

[English]

The Government has brought forward legislation which has caused profound concern in a broad cross-section of the

Criminal Code

community. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, a very respected umbrella organization including over 200 groups that are deeply concerned about pornography and the lies that it tells about women, has strongly condemned Bill C-54. It has urged the Government to go back to the drawing-board, to start again and bring forward legislation which reflects our concern about violence, degradation, and child pornography.

At the same time the Government has raised serious concerns in the artistic community. For example, I note the remarks of the artistic director of Toronto's Théâtre Passe Muraille, Clarke Rogers, who recently said the following:

—all that you do is intimidate artists and encourage self-censorship in the name of economic survival. If you are constantly being threatened by big legal bills, creativity is bound to suffer.

Of course there is a danger of self-censorship in the artistic community.

[Translation]

There is a danger of self-censorship by artists who are not wealthy because in our society artists are often poor, they are needy and they will suffer from this legislation.

[English]

This Government claims to be concerned about violence against women and degradation. Some of the greatest violence which can be perpetrated against women and children is the violence of poverty, the violence of sexual assaults, and the violence of beatings. However, this is a Conservative Government which has cut back on the funding for sexual assault crisis centres. It has cut back on the funding for centres to assist women who are victims of violence. It has cut back on programs to deal with sexual abuse of children, and it claims to be concerned about violence.

Pierre Berton put it well, as he so often does in his eloquent writings, when he said:

Under the hypocritical guise of saving us all from "kiddie porn", the yahoos and rednecks who run our lives have managed to turn the clock back and inform us that sex is naughty and we must be protected from it.

This is the thrust of the amendments to the Criminal Code on pornography that have just been placed before Parliament. In order to protect our children, we are all being treated like children. I, for one, resent it.

Well, so do I, Mr. Speaker. So do members of my caucus, so do members of the New Democratic Party.

I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Hon. Member for Outremont (Mrs. Pépin) in opposing this legislation. She indicated her support for the thrust of the recommendations of the Fraser Commission. However, I must say that I was somewhat surprised to hear those remarks, because the official spokesperson for her Party on justice has taken a very different position. The Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) does not agree with the Hon. Member for Outremont. He has said that the undue exploitation of sex should remain illegal in Canada. According to the Liberal justice critic, images of