

Private Members' Business

I remember in the last Parliament, the day before I introduced a similar provision in private members' business was the day of that unfortunate killing in Great Britain where the two 11-year old boys were involved. If that had happened here in Canada there would have been no intervention. In some provinces there would have been a social worker, but no Young Offenders Act. The social worker procedures vary from province to province. This would allow intervention at an early age, the same way we intervene for all young offenders.

The fourth area is a provision that deals with the community scourge of crack houses. Municipalities are crying out for some way to deal with this. I suggest the solution is to redefine what we call a disorderly house or a bawdy house in the Criminal Code and allow the same procedures that communities use to deal with bawdy houses and disorderly houses, where there are procedures to deal with what we call found-ins and procedures to deal with landlords. There is nothing else out there. It is a simple amendment, and many communities I know would want to take advantage of it to deal with crack houses.

Fifth is stiffer bail provisions for two categories of cases, where you have people out on bail or on peace bonds committing other offences. This proposal deals with being on bail or on a peace bond and committing an offence on the peace bond or committing another driving offence while on bail for a driving offence. There are very serious implications for the public to have a drunk out driving again when he or she is on bail on a driving offence. To reverse the onus in the bail does not mean they do not get bail; it means that it is up to them to show the judge why they should be released. The onus or the burden of proof changes in terms of entitlement to bail.

Last is a matter that has been discussed publicly. It would allow victims of sexual assault to have the blood of the accused tested only under a judge's order and in such a way that the evidence of the blood test would not be used against them in the trial. This provides something for the victim to make sure that he or she has not been infected with many of the sexually transmitted diseases that are out now. There are half a dozen of them. Some of them are lethal. We have to have some compassion for victims where you make a prima facie case in front of a judge and the judge says there will be a blood test. In this way the victim can be assured, as best we can using the medical testing we have, that he or she has not been infected with one of these STDs.

• (1350)

Those are the six parts. I have had a lot of help preparing this, first from my constituents, who have given me a lot of latitude here in Parliament to deal with a lot of issues. I hope the bill reflects their concerns. I received a lot of help from Canadians. I will mention some of the people with whom I have had contact over the last few years: Margot Blackburn, who has gone public, Priscilla de Villiers, who has gone public, Mrs. Mahaffy, the Rosenfeldts, and others. These people have all been direct or

indirect victims who want to see change. I have also spoken to public interest groups, Victims of Violence, CAVEAT, the Canadian Centre for Victims of Crime, financed by the Canadian Police Association.

I am grateful to my colleagues in this House for their continuing support. Sooner or later, I hope these initiatives will bear fruit.

[Translation]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak on private member's Bill C-242 tabled by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River. I shall be addressing in particular clauses 3 and 8 on lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

Before I begin, I would like to stress that I find it a bit strange that we are today debating a private member's bill from a member of the government party. He himself began his speech by stating that he was on the House of Commons justice committee for six years, nearly two of those while his own party formed the government. I find it somewhat strange that he is proposing this again today. I wonder, is it because he has not managed to influence his own minister of justice? Yet, as a member of the justice committee he has studied these specific aspects.

I am a bit surprised therefore to see a former member of the justice committee proposing such a bill. Perhaps this means—and I think some of the hon. members opposite might have something to say on this—that the matter was looked at somewhere and the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River was no doubt told that his bill was not in line with the government's intentions.

I am therefore prepared to debate it, but it is my impression—not that I want to say we are wasting our time—but that the energy expended by the hon. member, his good intentions notwithstanding, could have been better expended if he had worked on the office of the Minister of Justice, particularly the minister himself. But, there you are.

The members of the opposition, who have no real power, can see that the backbenchers of the government party do not have much power or influence over their cabinet colleagues either.

As I have stated, my speech will be on clauses 3 and 8, because they are aimed at dropping the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 12 to 10 years.

I recall being present here in the House when the Young Offenders Act was being discussed. That debate succeeded in lowering the age by two years. At that rate, and considering the number of debates there have been over time—you may think I am laying it on a bit thick—but if we keep dropping the age down every two years, in ten years they will be saying that the Criminal Code applies to babies. This is not logical, but there you have it. In Canada, government members, with the backing of the third party, are going along with a trend that is really