

It is important to say that we also need financial support for shelters for battered women, rape crisis centres and funding for groups who advocate on behalf of abused women and children and who do a lot of the necessary education in their communities with an extremely low budget.

Some provincial governments are taking positive steps on violence against women. The New Democrat government in British Columbia has set up 80 new counselling services for women who are victims of violence. It has funded 11 new sexual assault centres and tripled the number of government funded centres in British Columbia. It has put \$2 million into programs for aboriginal communities to end this kind of violence. It has instituted training programs for prosecutors, police, judges and service providers who work with these victims of violence. It has also instituted teacher training and a school curriculum to attempt to prevent violence. It has funded 145 new spaces in transition home shelters for women across British Columbia. It has given top priority in non-profit housing units for women who are leaving abusive situations and abusive partners. It has issued another directive to the police and to the Crowns in British Columbia to arrest and prosecute violent offenders to the fullest extent.

However, not every woman in Canada lives in British Columbia or in Ontario which has also taken steps to educate on these issues, and support women's centres, shelters and services and to prevent violence.

A Crown prosecutor in Montreal recently said that even under the proposed stalking law offenders will probably be charged by way of summary conviction which is accompanied by very short penalties. She said judges would be reluctant to hand out severe sentences for what they might consider to be normal behaviour. She said that many judges just think of such crimes as the pursuit of love.

In fact in the case of a man who broke a court order to keep away from his ex-girlfriend after being convicted of intimidating her, the judge told the woman: "You are going through what a lot of couples experience which is a domestic quarrel". He also said that the case was better suited to an afternoon talk show than to the courts.

### *Government Orders*

Criminal harassment of women is just not taken seriously. One Montreal woman was telephoned incessantly, followed and watched at her apartment by her ex-boyfriend. In the period of one month she complained to the police almost daily about his repeated phone calls, his intimidation and a rock through her window. He threatened her but the police told her that there was nothing they could do. Before they could act he needed to say something like: "I will kill you". Earlier this month he did attempt to kill her by stabbing her six times with a knife.

This bill is trying to stop that kind of behaviour before it escalates into attempted murder and murder, but I do not believe the government has given the police and the courts the proper tools to do that because without education offenders will merely be given probation like the case of woman who was confined and sexually assaulted for nine hours. Her attacker was out on bail and stalked, intimidated and terrorized her. He received 15 months probation for that behaviour.

• (1255)

This bill does not change the police officer or the attitude of the people who will respond in the future to those kinds of complaints. It does not change the Crown prosecutor who decides whether a case is serious enough to pursue. It does not change the judge who thinks intimidation is an ordinary part of human relationships and a matter for the Oprah show rather than the courts.

A new law which gives the courts the option of sentencing a repeat offender to a light penalty is not going to deter these obsessive men who spend their time and money to make a woman miserable, but most importantly to control her life. This is what we are talking about in this legislation: another person who wants to have total power and control over another individual's life.

Sadly, these offenders laugh at our criminal justice system because they know that no one will do anything to prevent their behaviour.

I believe this law on criminal harassment is a step forward. I am pleased to be here debating this today. I am pleased to have been the member of Parliament from my political party who had the opportunity to sit in on the legislative proceedings. But we must all remind