

Criminal Code

the force of peer pressure and commercial pressure to do things they will regret later on.

There are many measures in this bill which I support. I take pleasure in the fact that the government is introducing measures which deal with child pornography, about which we have spoken at length. I am super pleased that the government has included a measure dealing with parental kidnapping. I know hon. members realize that I have worked on that matter for about five years, and the government has now adopted that provision. However, while those provisions are in the bill, and they are good and necessary, there are provisions in this legislation which are deeply disturbing and could erode the future of our country. They will send signals out to the youth which will introduce them to a life that could cause misfortune, destruction, concern and care in their later years. As I have said, I intend to push for very close scrutiny with regard to the future implications of those provisions.

● (1650)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer)—Agriculture—Reduction in interest rate payments made by farmers; the hon. member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight)—Petro-Canada—Query respecting location for heavy oil upgrader in Saskatchewan. (b) Responsibility for site decision.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENTS WITH RESPECT TO SEXUAL OFFENCES AND THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG PERSONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Chrétien that Bill C-53, to amend the Criminal Code in relation to sexual offences and the protection of young persons and to amend certain other acts in relation thereto or in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-53, which is a large package of amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada. It relates

specifically to sexual offences and the protection of young people. It is a very broad bill. I think members should be very careful to realize that it probably contains too many dimensions for one bill and that it should be broken up into a series of bills so that members can more adequately direct their minds to it and vote accordingly.

For example, in this bill sexual offences are redefined to recognize that they are assaults. The number of offences is reduced and the law is simplified. Existing non-consensual sexual offences are replaced by the offences of sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault. The spousal immunity for rape is removed. Provisions of the Criminal Code are amended so as to apply equally to persons of both sexes. New offences are created for sexual misconduct by people involving young persons under the age of 16. An offence is created with regard to the exploitation of young people for pornographic purposes. The offence of abduction of children is redefined with a view to protecting children involved in custody suits. Changes are made to protect the complainant in sexual assault cases. These include restrictions on questions about previous sexual conduct with persons other than the accused. Then the general assault provisions of the code are redefined.

It is very clear that we are dealing with a vast package. It is very complex and there are many issues. I do believe that we should split the bill. However, until that occurs, I want to deal with the principle of many of the amendments. We need to recognize that we are dealing with the minimum of legal requirements which this Parliament is setting out. There is no doubt that we should be dealing at a much higher level in terms of our relationships with one another. Unfortunately, too often we find governments acting at the bare minimum level. We find adults acting at the bare minimum level rather than the much higher moral level to which we should all aspire.

This bill, as we debate it, will involve Members of Parliament sitting here making value judgments which will be put into effect by police forces across this huge country. That in itself will be very difficult.

As the caucus spokesman in our party for youth, I am particularly interested in, and will certainly want to monitor carefully, the speeches made on second reading. I will want to hear the witnesses who are brought before the committee so that we can make sure that we receive as parliamentarians a very broadly based group of people who will give evidence. This point was mentioned by the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen).

Too often we will have groups coming in dealing with only one section of the bill, putting enormous pressure on members individually and collectively to pass the bill in order to achieve several of the very good things which the bill does contain. But we must look at the entire bill. Each of us will have to make a decision as to whether we can support a bill, which may have some provisions that are very deleterious, particularly to the young people of this country. The bill does have some very bad principles in it when I think of it from a young person's point of view, and when we think of it from the position of maturity and experience, a state to which many of us are growing, in