

*Government Orders*

when we propose branding an adolescent as a "criminal delinquent"? Is that how the minister perceives the basis and the principle of rehabilitation? All the experts say that we should do exactly the opposite.

On top of totally missing the target, this bill is seriously flawed. These flaws show that the legislation was drafted hastily, obviously to satisfy some interest groups which deliberately scare the public. But is that fear justified? Following a series of violent crimes which were committed by minors and widely reported by the media, it appears that Canadians feel less secure. At least, that is what we are constantly being told by some Reform Party members. The question to ask is this: Has there been any significant rise in juvenile crime in Canada? In other words, is the Canadian public justified in its insecurity? Is there any real basis for this feeling of insecurity?

The answer to these three questions is no, Madam Speaker. According to Statistics Canada, the number of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 arrested for a crime fell by 5 per cent in 1992.

• (1925)

Although arrests for violent crime did increase by 6 per cent in that same year, many criminologists attribute this rise to increased police surveillance.

In Quebec, 11 young people were arrested for murder in 1992. Do these figures justify the repressive measures in this bill? No. Canada is not currently witnessing a rise in violent crime, but rather an increase in publicity surrounding a problem that has always existed and that will not be resolved by Bill C-37.

This was the conclusion of a Statistics Canada report made public last week, which found that crime had not increased in Canada in the past five years. It is therefore obvious, in my view, that our approach to juvenile crime must be reviewed.

The social and economic factors contributing to criminal behaviour must be taken into account. Social development measures and programs focusing on rehabilitation and, of course, prevention, must be considered. There are two diametrically opposed schools of thought as to what approach would be most effective in dealing with youth crime.

One method focuses on the young criminal and emphasizes arrest, trial, conviction and punishment. The other method focuses on reintegration into society, examines the underlying causes of delinquency and seeks to put young offenders back on the right track, without criminalizing them too much.

From the standpoint of health, which is my area of concern, it seems obvious that the second school of thought—which advocates prevention and rehabilitation—is preferable. Criminologists agree that there is no single cause for criminality.

Rather, criminal behaviour results from the interaction of a set of related factors, such as education, family environment, poverty, drug addiction, the promotion of violence, unemployment, inequalities, and so on.

The Minister of Justice stated, when he tabled the bill, that social reintegration, prevention and rehabilitation would be incorporated into his reform. Yet, having examined this bill more than once, I fail to see that it contains any measures to address these concerns. Of course, the first clause of the bill refers to this as a statement of principle. But not a word in the substantive clauses. The first clause is just a smokescreen, an attempt to attenuate the repressive aspects of this bill.

Last month, a resolution was tabled in the Quebec National Assembly and adopted by all members present except two. The resolution sent a very clear message to the Minister of Justice of Canada: "Let us keep dealing with our problems in our own way".

A few weeks ago, the newspaper *La Presse* published an article under the heading: "Quebec experts contradict Minister Allan Rock". The article said that the tougher approach to the Young Offenders Act announced last week by federal Minister of Justice Allan Rock had raised a flurry of protest among the experts, including educational psychologists, criminologists, specialized lawyers and members of the National Assembly.

That week, the same newspaper also reported what was said by the Quebec Minister of Justice and Attorney General, who stated, and I am referring to Bill C-27, that for Quebec, the status quo was enough, that that was what he wanted from Minister Rock, that, judging by the situation in Quebec, it was safe to say that in most cases of murders committed by teenagers, the present act was more than adequate.

If the Minister of Justice will not listen to the advice of the Official Opposition, perhaps he will listen to the Quebec Minister of Justice who is a Liberal and a federalist. It is a fact that Quebec has introduced an innovative penal and social system to deal with juvenile delinquency. For the past 15 years, Quebec has preferred to emphasize rehabilitation and readjustment instead of repression, pure and simple.

• (1930)

Our system attempts to identify the deep-seated causes of delinquency instead of merely considering what is readily apparent. We do not agree that a life sentence is the only answer for offenders with serious family and social problems.

In the red book, the Liberals promised changes that would include measures for crime prevention and rehabilitation, but it would seem these constructs were written at a time when it was politically expedient to do so. The fact is that the Minister of Justice and his government have yielded to pressures from certain members in this House who believe that the only way to protect themselves against young people who seem to terrify them is to whip them into shape.