

Beauchesne, among other things, it suggests that one is not to impute motives different from those acknowledged to a member.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask if you could rule on whether the suggestion that I was pandering to anti-Mexican feeling—I must say that I take this personally as quite a strong insult, given my background and past involvement with Mexico—and on whether that is not imputing bad motives to another member.

• (1530)

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that the hon. member's intervention will be brought to the attention of the minister. I am not going to make any more comment until I know that the minister has heard the hon. member's intervention.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-17, an act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Wednesday, May 30, consideration of the motion of Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre) that Bill C-58, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act and the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this measure to amend the Young Offenders Act. Prior to dealing with some of the proposals in detail, I want to go back and take a look at some of the history of young offenders legislation in Canada.

Government Orders

When I first started out working in the social service field, my first experiences were working in juvenile court and juvenile detention centres. At that time we were dealing with the Juvenile Delinquency Act.

I went back to university and I wrote my masters thesis on the juvenile court, which at that time was comparable to a star chamber kangaroo court in the way that it dealt with young people. It failed to protect their legal rights. It failed to protect their social rights. It had tremendous powers to disrupt family lives, to sentence youth for petty, inane and nuisance crimes to long periods of incarceration.

The history in Canada of our treatment of juvenile offenders is not one of which we can be proud. The Young Offenders Act was in legal form a vast improvement. My concern is that some of the potential that should have been realized through the Young Offenders Act has not been realized simply because of the behaviour of this government in reneging on its promises to provide services.

Because of this, the resources for programs and services to juveniles that the government has been providing have been lacking. The government is now reverting to an age-old practice which says that rather than provide the resources and services we need we will try to increase the penalties.

Before we agree that this should be done in a mandatory manner, we should take a look at who are the youth in this country who are still subject to the Young Offenders Act.

Recently in the city of Edmonton school principals and teachers who dealt with young offenders documented that 60 per cent to 80 per cent of all kids coming before the juvenile authorities under the Young Offenders Act had severe learning disabilities. These youth were in need of special assistance because of their learning problems.

Many youth come from families that borderline on poverty or are impoverished. Grade 1 teachers could tell us of most of the youth who come before juvenile court that these are children who were going to get into difficulty because of learning disabilities, anti-social behaviour, and family disruption.

Yet we are unwilling to provide the resources to ensure that these children have the opportunity to grow up and be productive and useful members of our society.