

*Oral Questions*

court is for the prosecuting lawyer to make. That person takes direction from the Attorney General of the province of Quebec.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have received nearly 50,000 letters and I know the minister has received the same amount regarding the Young Offenders Act.

We have continually heard from this minister that crime prevention, assistance for troubled youth at risk will stop these horrible crimes. It is too late for these two elderly people.

We have been told by provincial agencies that this government talks about assistance for youth at risk but does nothing. I ask the minister: When will he become a minister of action instead of an acting minister?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the record will show that I have never claimed we are going to be able to stop all crime. That is not going to happen.

What I have said is that while there is a role for toughening up the laws and providing better responses and enforcement, that is not all that is required. A great deal of other things are required as well and we have to focus on all of them.

• (1455)

I respond to the hon. member by saying that we have taken action by passing Bill C-37. We have taken action by asking the committee to recommend further changes. We have created the National Crime Prevention Council. My colleagues in cabinet are working in a variety of ways to address the underlying social causes of crime in this country.

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[Translation]

### BURUNDI

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The UN special envoy to Burundi accused the international community of pushing that country toward a genocide. Yesterday, in Bujumbura, that official denounced the international community's inconsistency and irresponsibility regarding the crisis in Burundi, where two million people may have to leave their homes, thus creating the world's largest concentration of refugees, according to the British Red Cross.

Will the minister once again remain insensitive to the increasing number of calls for help in Burundi?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me simply remind the hon. member what Canada has done in recent weeks and months to avoid a crisis

which could reach proportions similar to the one which occurred in Rwanda.

First, the Secretary of State responsible for Latin America and Africa personally travelled to Bujumbura to participate in a meeting to find solutions to the refugee problem.

Second, Canada tabled a resolution which was supported by all the ministers attending a conference of the Francophonie, which was held in France, and where it was decided to send a ministerial delegation to Burundi to try to work out a solution with local authorities.

Third, the Canadian government is subsidizing NGO's, particularly the International Red Cross, in their efforts to help the civilian populations affected by the conflict.

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister already told us about his information, his concerns, his representations and his hopes. However, my question is: How can Canada remain unconcerned by the plea for help made yesterday by the UN special envoy in Burundi? What is Canada waiting for to act, to show some leadership and to help a fellow member of the Francophonie? After all, Canada has displayed such leadership in the past.

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for recognizing that the government is already involved. It is not fair to say that we are unconcerned. On the contrary, the initiatives which I just mentioned reflect our will to find a solution.

The hon. member would like Canada to be a leader regarding that issue. We are prepared to take on the role which the parties involved would like us to assume. Canada cannot impose itself. However, we have clearly shown that we are willing and prepared to help the parties involved if it is their wish.

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[English]

### JUSTICE

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, seven weeks ago the 14-year old daughter of two constituents of mine moved in with a 26-year old convicted sex offender. Neither the parents nor the police can do anything about this because the law states that the age of consent is 14 years.

Does the Minister of Justice see this as a case of child exploitation, or is the government content to see the situation continue?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice has under review the whole question of the age of consent to sexual activity precisely because of our concern for the young people who might otherwise be victimized.

I do however emphasize that the criminal law is not entirely silent in this respect. For example, as provided in section 273.1