

Government Orders

• (2015)

However, the gauntlet has been thrown down on that one issue which lists and categorizes people and says that only they and no others are entitled to protection against hate. It was a bit frivolous when he started saying everybody has a race, a religion and so on. The hon. member knows it goes much deeper than that. In any event I will play on his turf and by his rules.

This is not a very hypothetical question, but if a man who happens to be Jewish goes into the bad section of town and is beaten half to death by somebody who wants to take his wallet, does that man suffer any less than he would have suffered had his assailant known he was Jewish when he was beating him? I would like a straight answer to that question.

Mr. Dromisky: Mr. Speaker, the victim in this case has been robbed and in the process has received a physical form of abuse that could be very devastating. In both cases we have laws to cover them. I do not think the attack was perpetrated by the attacker knowing the gentleman was a Jew. Therefore I think the law covers it and states very clearly exactly what type of treatment the criminal must receive in this case.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the police commission has written a letter. It opposes this bill very strongly. If the hon. member has not seen the letter, I suggest he get a copy. It is stated loud and clear in the letter that in the courts today there are numerous texts, illustrations and periodicals and case law. All of that has been put together and they have been using it for a number of years to address hate crimes. They have been doing it very effectively I might add.

If the Liberal government thinks this is not being done, then someone should talk to one of the Liberal members on the justice committee who stated statistics from court trials where it was shown that the homosexual community is third on the list behind racial and possibly religious hate crimes. There are records of all these things that are happening. It is presently being done. That is why the police commission opposes this section. It is simple duplication and is unnecessary. They know what they are doing and they are doing a good job.

What is the real reason for section 718.2 if it is already being done?

Mr. Dromisky: Mr. Speaker, the arguments and challenge being presented right now are the very kind of questions that were probably asked in the 1930s in this Chamber. In the 1930s the very same principles were being advocated by opponents to changes in our laws.

We have identified various groups in our society in the history of this country who have been victimized by hate. Various individuals have been attacking specific groups. The need arose. The need was

identified and a responsible Parliament of the day made a change in the Criminal Code to make sure that we could protect that segment of Canadian society from various ignorant people, as I would like to call them.

We have reached a point in the history of this country where for some reason or other a group of individuals is being attacked, hatred being the main motivating factor. As a result we are taking into consideration the need to protect this segment of our society. That is why a change has taken place in that section.

• (2020)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the member seems so convinced that logically the bill is defensible. Why then is it necessary to tell all of the members on the government side how to vote on it? Why can they not figure it out for themselves if it is so convincingly logical?

Mr. Dromisky: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have to convince anybody on the government side as to how they should vote on this bill. I know that members of the government are extremely rational individuals who are very very concerned about the safety of their compatriots, their constituents and the citizens of this country.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for York—Simcoe. Perhaps it could be put on the record that by an understanding the hon. member for York—Simcoe is sharing the slot with the hon. member who just spoke on debate.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House to debate an issue that is of importance to all Canadians. I would like to take this opportunity to express my strong support for Bill C-41.

In particular, I would like to address the sentencing provisions of crimes motivated by hate. There has been an incredible amount of misinformation surrounding these amendments. I appreciate this opportunity to relay the facts and clarify any misconceptions that may have arisen over the course of this debate.

Bill C-41 is a general bill that proposes amendments to the sentencing provisions of the Criminal Code. One of these amendments proposes harsher sentences for those already convicted of crimes motivated by hate on a number of grounds, including race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation of the victim.

Currently there are certain hate crimes that are not covered by Canada's anti-hate laws. These include Criminal Code offences motivated by hatred against a targeted group which do not involve hate propaganda such as physical attacks or murder. In the past the law has viewed synagogue desecration as simple mischief without acknowledging the intense pain and fear suffered by members of the entire targeted community. Therefore, it is imperative that hate motivated crimes be included in this bill.