

Government Orders

• (1610)

At the insistence of the Bloc Quebecois, clause 718.2 now contains two additional factors, so that national or ethnic origin as well as language are now part of the list.

We felt it was imperative to send a clear message to the courts to punish crimes motivated by prejudice based on language. A person has no right to abuse a francophone because he speaks French, and this applies to all language minorities in Canada. I hate violence in any form, and I particularly hate violence motivated by prejudice, the most damaging of all.

Violence against women is the most obvious example. I therefore support unreservedly a bill that identifies the gender-based bias of the aggressor as an extreme example of a morally reprehensible attitude. We have every right to disagree with some of the provisions of the bill, and we have the right to express our opinions. However, some opinions make me fear the worst.

Not so long ago, the debate centred on discrimination against Blacks and visible minorities in general. Bill C-41 is an indication that our society is moving in the right direction, towards civic responsibility and tolerance. Violence in any form must be condemned. The consequences of crimes motivated by hate are profound. There is not just one victim. There are many. Every member of these groups becomes a victim.

This is a situation that cannot be tolerated. We each have to choose the kind of society we want. And I have chosen to live in a society that condemns violence.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before resuming debate, 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 C-44, an Act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act.

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[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr Speaker, I am glad to speak for the last time on this bill in the House. No doubt I will be

speaking about it in many places across the country as people contact me by phone, letter and fax to express their concerns and ask questions about the form it has taken as it leaves the House on its way to the Senate for final approval or amendment.

I would like to touch on three areas in Bill C-41. I want to look at the alternative measures. I want to look at that part which deals with section 745. And of course I want to touch briefly on section 718.2. Perhaps I could start there.

The justice minister took considerable time to dwell on what has been known as the hate category. It is unfortunate that many parts of the bill have been overshadowed by concern for what is in this particular part. We have to examine the bill from the viewpoint of whether it is a good bill or whether it is a bad bill, whether it is good legislation or whether it is bad legislation.

I submit with respect that this is not a good bill and that it is bad legislation. I will attempt to justify my concerns in my address and intervention this afternoon.

• (1615)

The bill does not deal with the cause of hatred. It does not deal with the cause of prejudice or with the cause of bias. It does not deal with those issues which give rise to frustration, anger, stress and fear which I submit humbly is the mother of hatred.

We see the government passing legislation that creates anger, fear and frustration. All we have to do is read the letters we receive on Bill C-68, on Bill C-41 and on the MP pension bill. That is all we have to do to see what the government is doing to contribute to the degree of anger and frustration across the country.

The bill is not attacking the cause. It is not alleviating those fundamental feelings that result in bias, prejudice, hatred which eventually express themselves in human acts, one human against another.

When I was growing up and going to school in Saskatchewan in our community there were people from all ethnic groups. There were ethnic jokes, Ukrainian jokes and jokes against the English and the Scottish and the French. Almost every one of those jokes was a putdown. Although they were humorous they were still putdowns and yet they did not bother any of us because we all knew we stood equal before the law.

After all was said and done we all stood equal before the law and that is what is being destroyed. At least the sense of that is being destroyed; that the government is introducing legislation creating special rights for special status for some citizens. That is what will create a bias. If one grants special rights and special privileges to individuals, one will see other individuals resenting that. They will see the bias and the prejudice occur.