

*Private Members' Business*

bers agree also with the principle—we come back to the key word again—of the bill. Everyone agrees with it.

Everyone agrees, and I agree as well, that there must be consultation with the provinces. I am one who believes in consultation with the provinces. My gosh, I am a refugee from the Dobbie-Beaudoin committee. Having gone through that war, I can tell you the one thing our committee had pretty well burned into our collective skull was that we have to consult with the provinces in order to invoke any kind of constitutional change.

• (1150)

We are not talking about rewriting the Constitution here, we are simply talking about compensating Canadians who fall through the cracks, where there is no federal jurisdiction, Canadians who are travelling or working in other countries and who happen to be injured or killed as a result of a criminal act.

Government members say that these Canadians, rather than having this bill passed to help them and compensate them, could normally get help from the Canadian embassies abroad. This is not always the case. In the case my colleague from Victoria mentioned, the woman had been brutally raped and her family had their money and valuables stolen in Jamaica and they received no help whatsoever from the Canadian High Commissioner.

This bill will require, will mandate, will demand that these people get help. Do not tell me that private insurance will help these people who fall through the cracks. Private insurance will not cover many of these costs. Private insurance will not give the help when it is needed. If we are talking about private insurance to protect Canadians when these types of problems occur, why did that argument not work at the provincial and territorial level? Why did the provinces and territories not say: "We are not going to pass any victims' indemnity programs or laws. Go to the private insurance network. You are in better hands with All State." Give me a break. Why do we not just turn the entire social contract that Canadians have with our government to provide certain help for us all over to the insurance companies?

**An hon. member:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Edmonston:** A government member says hear, hear. This is incredible. We are here because our voters

want action. That is another thing I learned from the Beaudoin-Dobbie constitution committee. People are tired of us pussy-footing around, playing off one jurisdiction against another, washing our hands of the thing and saying,

[*Translation*]

it's not our problem, it's not our responsibility. The hon. member opposite just said "really", but he doesn't want us to spend money. The public is sick and tired of seeing us spend money.

But this bill isn't about spending money, because we already have provincial and territorial programs for compensating victims of criminal acts. We are not proposing a new bureaucracy, because the bureaucracy already exists. Victims can simply file an application with the provincial agency, which will then make arrangements with the federal government. That's all.

[*English*]

In conclusion, I wish to repeat that I support my colleague from Victoria and his private member's bill, C-310. It does something important which is not done at the provincial and territorial level regarding people who are victims of criminal acts while travelling in foreign countries or working there. I will be darned if I will accept the argument from the Conservative side of the House that we have to consult the provinces on the principle, that we have to go to insurance companies on a principle or that we have to pussy foot around on a principle.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue on the same theme as the member for Chambly. I did not intend to participate in this debate. I listened to the member for Chambly carefully and I tend to share his view.

We are talking about moving a piece of legislation into committee for further refinement on the basic mechanisms that are involved. I just do not understand how the government can object.

It seems to me if there was one thing I discovered when I was going through the Dobbie-Beaudoin committee report last week—of course, I do not agree with most of it—it was that one of the few things that the national government is left with after this report is the fact that we are the leaders in this nation on international affairs.