

Government Orders

Liberal government has to understand that victims should have the right to have oral and written statements put forward.

There are other things about the criminal justice system that have just got to be said. It is about the intimidation of witnesses. I am looking here at a document produced by a colleague on the government side concerning judicial review decisions of people who were sentenced to death. That sentence was revoked and put into the current life sentence, which is 25 years, and now under section 745 the sentencing decision is being reduced further. That is appalling. It is truly appalling to be reducing these sentences.

Let me give two examples in which I was involved. Dwight Lucas was sentenced to 20 years for a non-capital murder. That was reduced to 16 years. An individual from Quebec has had his 25-year sentence for killing a police officer reduced to 15 years. At the time of the killing the individual would have been put to death but they said: "No, we will make it 25 years". Now, after time has gone by, the individual's sentence has been reduced to 15 years. That is wrong. These people are out on the streets and ultimately, when other crimes are committed, witnesses are going to need protection against the very people we are letting out who should not have been let out in the first place.

The thinking over there is truly convoluted. It does not wash with the greater portion of people. The government thinks it is right. What is it going to take to convince the Liberal government that its laws in the criminal justice system are just too liberal?

It will take a removal of the government in the next election. For those folk who are listening, it will come down to some very specific issues in the next election: the economy, the criminal justice system and just how democratic or undemocratic the process in the House of Commons actually is.

Mr. Thompson: The pensions.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): The MPs pensions, my colleague from Wild Rose said. That will always be an issue. Since he has mentioned it, I did wear my piggy tie for those who are still involved in the MPs pension plan, just so people would notice. I had not thought of that until they raised it.

• (1115)

There are times when we have to use a crook to catch a crook and we have to use the information they have as witnesses. Yes, unfortunately some of those individuals get off from their crimes and some of those people have to be under a witness protection act. I suppose the end justifies the means in that case. However there are a lot more people out there today witnessing crimes who are just too intimidated to do anything about it. All I ask is that the Liberal government follow through with a

thorough witness protection act and regulations that are well meaning and protect the witness.

We do not need rhetoric such as we heard on the Young Offenders Act when government members said they had made great changes. They did not. We do not need rhetoric like that. We need to do Bill C-78 right. We need to protect the good people who want to come forward.

Members opposite are enjoying this. They say that they do things right. If they are doing things so right, why are there so many victims? If they are doing things right, why are there so many complaints about the Young Offenders Act, which was absolutely boggled by the Liberal government? If they are absolutely right about what they are doing, why is it that down in Cornwall the government does not have the courage of its convictions to go on to the reserve and end the crime wave? Why is that? If they are doing things right, why is that? That kept them quiet for a moment.

What is wrong is the government is very long on rhetoric and very short on dealing with the actual problems. It does not have the courage to go on to the reservations to deal with the crime rate. Meanwhile the people off reserve are suffering from the crime wave. Where do they think the drugs are coming from that are in the schools in Cornwall? They know where they are coming from. Where do they think the guns are coming from?

This is not something we dreamed up. We were down there listening. The government is not listening. It should get up the courage to go on to some of the reservations and deal with organized crime. That the government is doing something is hogwash. It is doing nothing.

I am glad we had this little chat, but it is more than a little chat members opposite need. People who are listening to this debate will understand that there is a big difference between being long on rhetoric and short on action. This will haunt the Liberal Party in the next election. The treatment that victims are getting today from government legislation is abysmal. That is why there are groups like Victims of Violence, CRY and CAVEAT. They are springing up all across the country. They know that the legislation the government puts through is wrong.

I have a few notes about Bill C-45.

• (1120)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I remind the member we are discussing Bill C-78.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, I got carried away, because none of the bills they have put forward so far are any good. I am surprised that Bill C-78 is something I can agree with.