

*Government Orders*

Therefore I appreciate that the motion was to send it to a legislative committee, but I would think that perhaps at some other time it might be appropriate for the House leader, in conjunction with the opposition leaders, instead to refer this bill to the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. I am sure members from all parties with their backgrounds will give the bill a very full hearing. We contemplate the calling of witnesses, a very detailed clause by clause examination, and the bill coming back to this House a refined product benefiting all Canadians and speaking to the public safety of all Canadians.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make submissions on Bill C-36, an act respecting corrections and the conditional release and detention of offenders and to establish the office of correctional investigators.

I suppose an editorial headline in a newspaper in Ontario, the *Whig Standard* sums it up: "The parole system overhaul a big scam on public". That is the headline of an article written on October 12, 1991.

I have been the solicitor general spokesman for the Official Opposition for the last seven years and you will have to forgive me for my cynicism and the cynicism of a great number of people interested in criminal law reform when we approach this particular government initiative with considerable scepticism.

This is the third attempt or the third time this government over the last seven years has said or announced to much fanfare that it intends to reform the criminal justice system. I remember about three years ago, it was just a few months before the general election campaign in November 1988, one of my friend's predecessors, Mr. Kelleher, had a huge press conference at the press theatre on Wellington Street and announced parole reform.

Many of the same or similar headlines were in newspapers right across the country: "The government intends to get tough on parole", "The government intends to change the parole system".

What happened to that legislation? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. It was not even introduced in the House of Commons and it appears obvious now that what the government was engaged in was a public relations scam. What the government is doing this week is again trying to

manipulate the process and it is involved in a public relations scam again.

This is crime prevention week. Crime prevention week has been in effect for close to 10 years. It is a week set aside by municipalities and police forces right across the country to focus attention on matters affecting crime prevention.

This government has chosen this week to debate and discuss a number of different pieces of legislation affecting the criminal justice system. We have to ask why the government waited so long. Why has it waited seven years before bringing in legislation to deal with the criminal justice system?

I will speak more specifically about the legislation before the House but before doing so I have to call into question the government's credibility, its sincerity and commitment to meaningful criminal law reform, given its track record over the last seven years.

We know that this government is desperate. The government's popularity is at an all-time low. We know that the Reform Party is now a more popular political party than the governing party. This government is trying to do whatever possible to try to gain some public support. As part of that desperate attempt to gain some public support, it has decided to bring in a series of law and order pieces of legislation, at least to bring them forward this week when a lot of these bills have been on the Order Paper, have been discussed and debated at committee for the last seven years. All of a sudden the government decides that it is going to bring this legislation forward this week.

At the very same time it claims to be committed to criminal law reform, what does the government do? It cuts \$2 million in funding for crime prevention week. This week is crime prevention week and this government has decided to axe \$2 million.

It is fine for the Prime Minister to go abroad as a buffoon, whether it is in the Caribbean or elsewhere, and write off multimillion dollar loans and grants to other countries. It is fine for the Prime Minister to say that and to try to score some cheap political points overseas, and yet when it comes to programs in Canada that have had a positive effect, the government decides to be chintzy in cutting \$2 million from crime prevention week. Groups