

## Oral Questions

• (1450)

[English]

## YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

**Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The operation of the juvenile justice system's results as seen by average Canadians seems overly protective of young offenders. The Young Offenders Act has extensive rules of non-disclosure, secrecy and the destruction of records.

Will the minister explain to Canadians why there is a need for this inequity between the juvenile system and the adult system, for surely justice must be seen to be done as well as done?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will know that the juvenile justice system in Canada was developed through many years and was provided for in a statute in 1984 which had the support of all parties in this House when the Young Offenders Act was enacted.

The underlying principle is that the distinctions to which the hon. member has referred are appropriate when we are dealing with youth who have their lives in front of them, who are particularly appropriate for rehabilitation efforts.

At the same time, as we undertook to do last year when we campaigned for office, we have now introduced in Bill C-37 proposals for specific amendments to strengthen that statute, to deal with 16 and 17 year olds who commit the crimes of most serious violence in a particular way that will presume they are to be tried in adult court, to share the information with school boards, principals of schools and members of the community when there are young offenders who are accused or suspected of crimes that might endanger the public safety, and make a variety of other changes including increasing the maximum sentence for murder.

This government with those proposed changes in my respectful view has proposed to strengthen the Young Offenders Act while preserving the main elements of juvenile justice.

**Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, could this minister cite any cases in which there has been harm which has given rise to the necessity of the secrecy provisions of the Young Offenders Act, for in contrast on occasions I have mentioned in this House where there has been death as a direct result of the misguided Liberal idealism?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that a relative handful of crimes each year for which there are convictions in youth courts involve serious crimes of violence or homicides. The vast majority of crime among young people is non-violent, either property related or crimes of theft.

The provisions to which the hon. member refers are intended to ensure that when young people make a mistake of that character, yes they are punished and yes they have learned a lesson, but they are not through the publication of their names in the media stigmatized for life, prevented from completing their education or from gaining employment. Surely that is in the public interest in this country.

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[Translation]

## LOCAL TRAINING BOARDS

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The federal government is about to announce the creation of local training boards in Ontario. Will the minister assure this House that the membership of these local boards will reflect the spirit of Bill 8 in Ontario regarding the provision of services in French, and will he ensure a fair and proportional representation of Ontario francophones on these boards?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier for his question and also congratulate him for his many years of efforts to protect the rights of francophones everywhere in Canada.

Indeed, we are currently discussing the establishment of local training boards with the Ontario government, and with all the other provincial governments.

These boards will include representatives from the business sector, unions, social groups and educational institutions. I can tell you that I will make sure that there is a fair and proportional representation of francophones on these boards in Ontario.

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## MASS LAYOFFS

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development, and he surely does not have a prepared response because I did not give him the question in advance.

The industrial base of the Sorel-Tracy region has been collapsing for the past ten years, and dramatic plant closures have become everyday occurrences. After MIL Tracy, Tioxide and Beloit came the news recently that Soreltex was closing. The pressing needs resulting from these many shutdowns drove the Sorel Employment Centre in April to ask the department for an additional \$2.2 million to offset the demand generated by these mass layoffs.