

Human Rights

To many people in Toronto, a homosexual is someone to hate, someone to ridicule, someone to ostracize, someone to push around, someone who should not be allowed to even live in this city.

I am always puzzled by any kind of group labelling, be it of Jews or black or homosexuals. I have known many homosexuals over the years. Some of them I liked, some I didn't. But the liking or the disliking had everything to do with what kind of people they were, and nothing to do with their sexual preference, which is none of my business.

I suspect that most dislike of homosexuals is based in ignorance or fear, so I asked Ron Longevin, a research psychologist at the Clarke Institute, to answer some questions. Longevin is involved in a program that is examining the origin and nature of homosexuality.

He says, "We are still several years away from having all the answers. We cannot tell you for sure what makes someone become a homosexual, but we can tell you what does not.

It has nothing to do with having a dominant mother and a Milquetoast father, as is popularly believed. That may be true of some homosexuals who turn up in psychiatric clinics, but it is also true of some heterosexuals in the same situation."

Longevin is convinced that when research is completed, it will prove that homosexuality is linked to brain waves, blood chemistry, and hormones.

He says, "Homosexuality is not a matter of choice, and it is important for the public to understand that. People think that it should be easy for someone to change a sexual preference pattern but it is not. The true homosexual cannot change his erotic preference—I have yet to see a case where, no matter what was tried, there was any true change."

Longevin says there is no way that a person can be seduced into a life of homosexuality. "We have to differentiate between isolated homosexual behavior, and having a fixed preference for one's own sex. There is an important difference.

"According to the Kinsey studies, about 25 per cent of the population has had a homosexual experience at one time or another. It's common among boys in school, or jail, or other situations where men are separated from women for a long period of time. But once those men go back to a normal life, where women are available, their real preference for heterosexual sex prevails.

"About 4 per cent of men, however, have a fixed sexual preference for their own sex. The percentage in women is still unknown. That preference cannot be created, and it cannot be taken away."

Longevin says "Homosexuals fall in love in the same way the rest of us do. There is an idealization of the partner, and an emphasis on romance. And when a relationship ends, there is no difference between a broken-hearted homosexual and a broken-hearted heterosexual."

Because society has ostracized the homosexual community and tends to joke about its attempts to create stability and exchange public marriage vows, there is a tendency to promiscuity and one-night stands that leads to a higher incidence of venereal disease.

"Until homosexuality can be institutionalized, there can be no constraining norms. I suspect that the young heterosexual would also go from partner to partner, if there wasn't some expectation on the part of society to marry. When the homosexual gets older, he has a need for some stability, and he can be very lonely."

Longevin says the true homosexual usually feels revulsion about the idea of sex with a woman: "When he's a teenager, and begins to realize that he is gay, he may try very hard to date women to prove that he is not, but he will have an aversion to that. The married homosexual will have sex with his wife, but he doesn't enjoy it. It's a job, a chore that he compares to masturbation. Sometimes he gets through it by fantasizing about another man."

Accepting the inevitability of the sexual-preference pattern is essential to any true understanding of the homosexual community. Longevin says, "When I started out as a clinician, I had read all the theories, and I saw homosexuals as people who were sick. I soon discovered that they are just like the rest of the population—some of them are sick, some are normal. My perspective on the problem has changed completely.

"There is no one personality that is a homosexual. They include laborers, teachers, politicians, priests, some very fascinating people. Some of the greatest geniuses the world has known, including Leonardo da Vinci and Tchaikovsky

were homosexuals. They have an important contribution as people to make to society and it is a shame to persecute them and alienate them."

Longevin wishes that we would see homosexuals as people rather than queers. "I suppose it is easier to want to destroy than to understand, but when we try to suppress homosexuality we only create rebels."

I can understand why some people might feel repulsed by the idea of homosexuality. But I am convinced that the hate and intolerance that was unleashed last week within the straight community poses a far more serious threat to the soul of Toronto. Labelling and hating groups can get to be a habit, and that could destroy this city.

The purpose of my intervention is not to condone homosexuality but to deplore, in the strongest possible terms, what amounts to a vicious hate campaign against those who are different from me. My purpose is to urge that the homosexual community be accorded the same rights and responsibilities as other members of our society.

● (1640)

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, I believe this debate ends in approximately six minutes. Would the hon. member be candid enough to indicate that the real purpose of her talk is to talk this bill out because she and her party disagrees with it?

Mrs. Appolloni: Mr. Speaker, I think it is against the rules of the House to impute motives to any member. If the hon. member has something meaningful to add to this debate about the homosexual community, I would suggest that he get on with it instead of wasting his time and everybody else's by trying to impute motives to others.

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, has the hon. member finished her speech?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, in the approximately five minutes remaining, I wish to speak in favour of the bill in the name of my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney). I commend her for wishing to refer this bill to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs so that the homosexual community can have a forum in which to discuss openly issues concerning themselves and to make a case for the protection of their rights like any other group of Canadians.

Before I get into some of the issues, and I know time is extremely short, may I say for the record that I was informed by a member of the Liberal caucus that the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen), the hon. member for York South-Weston (Mrs. Appolloni) and the hon. member for Scarborough Centre (Mr. Kelly) were here, either having volunteered or having been assigned, to talk out the bill. We have heard two members of the Liberal caucus—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect to the hon. member, the rules of the House forbid the imputing of motives. This is the second time this matter has been brought to the attention of the hon. member. I suggest that the hon. member get on with his speech.