

*Government Orders*

The government states that it is to establish a statement of purpose and principles of parole and establish public safety as the paramount consideration in decisions relating to correctional release of inmates. Our response is that the bill pays lip-service to the protection of the public. The government is pretending that it is protecting "law and order", yet the bill exposes the public to danger in many different ways.

For someone like myself, as a member of Parliament who represents a very poor part of the country and a very poor riding, the question of parole, the question of institutionalization of inmates, the question of when people should be on the street, and when in an institution is not just an academic question, but is one which is paramount to the safety and concerns of citizens.

When we look at a piece of legislation such as this we must ask ourselves what is it that we are trying to accomplish here in Parliament.

• (1240)

What we are trying to do is to reach out and help people in communities to survive in what sometimes can be very dangerous situations.

This debate includes not only those people who are so-called law and order people and so-called reformers of the system, but also citizens who are afraid to step out of their houses and who are not quite sure why they are afraid to step out of their houses. Many are convinced that they should not be afraid to step out of the house. People are concerned that their children cannot get to school safely. People are concerned that they do not have a playground.

There are areas in my city in which people leave their kids on a bus. They send their kids on a bus a mile and one-half away rather than have them play in a large park right across from their apartment because of the drug dealing taking place.

The question of keeping people off the streets and in prisons and other institutions is by no means the only answer. In reviewing the legislation, I am struck by the limited approach of this government. One of the basic premises of our criticism and one that has taken place in this House since 1984, particularly since 1988 when I first came here, is the amount of money being taken out of

the system to deal with basic questions such as penal reform.

Look at the cuts in transfer payments, which we have discussed at great length, and the end product of the number of people who did not have access to proper training is one example. Look at the removal of the core area initiative with its many community infrastructures and how that affects downtown Winnipeg. Look at the withdrawal of training moneys for aboriginal youth. You realize you are setting up a situation in which people are going to be in difficulty.

First you have to ask yourself, what is the over-all situation affecting the behaviour of people? The over-all situation is that people have less and less support from their government. Government does not represent Ottawa or the legislature in Winnipeg or the city hall of main street. When you are talking about government you are talking about people who have formed an institution to doing something in common. When that institution no longer wishes to do things in common, claiming to be out of money, claiming that you are not a priority, claiming that it does not care whatever the language is, the reality is that once people feel that their community organizations as expressed through government cannot afford or support them, it leads to all sorts of anti-social behaviour.

Some of that is plain and simply withdrawing from society, giving up quietly. Other times the reaction is quite forceful and miserable. It leads to crime against property and against people. There is no justification for it. We have to believe in each other. We have to respect each other. We have to be careful never to set up a situation in which we blame the system and not assume that an individual must take responsibility for his or her actions. When a system leaves somebody, it is going to cause a reaction back. That is, the person will leave the system one way or the other. That is one part of it.

The other part of the problem is that once you set up that a person has done something contrary to the system, then you must have within government the capacity to respond properly. That responsibility is set upon on a number of principles. For example, the principle can be that we want to keep people off the streets and in prisons as long as possible. We do not want to let them out. We do not want them on the streets.