

Criminal Code Amendments

it is blacked out, and much of that pertains to the particular circumstances surrounding this death.

● (1200)

It is the systemic problems which particularly concern me. I think this is relevant to Bill C-67 because community residential centres are the kinds of places to which prisoners are sent under mandatory supervision. Of the seven full-time and the one part-time officers in the Ottawa area, the most experienced had all of 13 months of experience. It appears from the report that she was expected to stand in for the area manager when the area manager was absent on holiday or for some other reason. In other words, inexperienced staff was being used to investigate the possible suspension of supervision or suspension of parole of prisoners. Also the report indicated that they tended to be too soft and rather forgiving to prisoners who went out on benders or formed liaisons with young women and so on. I cannot judge all this partly because a lot of the material has been expurgated. Nonetheless, since parole officers are an essential part of the justice system for prisoners who are placed in the halfway position of being out of prison and on their way to re-establishing themselves into society, or so we hope, we would have thought that Corrections Canada and the National Parole Board would have been more mindful of that weakness. If that weakness can occur in the nation's capital, it can occur systemically in any other part of the country. That raises real questions in my mind. We have parole officers who are underqualified and inexperienced. We have Corrections Canada which is incapable, even in Ottawa, it seems, of enforcing action when it had really deep and longstanding concerns, not just temporary ones, about a particular halfway house.

These are the kinds of things which lead me to say that we should be looking at the nature of the rehabilitation services which we offer to see if there is some way to improve them, rather than adopt the approach in this particular Bill which is be more vindictive.

The average cost of having a prisoner in penitentiary is estimated to be \$40,000 per annum. Presumably the cost for prisoners who have committed violent offences and are in maximum security institutions is a good deal higher. If we include the capital cost of facilities which are now being built over some period of amortization or depreciation, the cost would be higher still. We are talking about \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year for prisoners in high security institutions. The effect of the Bill could well be that we will increase substantially the demand for maximum institutions because those prisoners will be kept in such institutions for longer periods of time. Let us compare that with the cost of keeping a prisoner in the community. A prisoner on parole who is not in a halfway house can cost as little as \$3,000 or \$4,000 per annum at current levels of parole supervision. A prisoner in a halfway house such as Kirkpatrick House can cost \$40 per day or about \$13,000 or \$14,000 per year. In other words, the disparity is such that surely we should be looking at better means of rehabilitation. Surely we should be putting more resources into

what those prisoners are doing when they are out in the community.

I see that my time is up. I hope one of my colleagues will ask me a question or two about this particular case. However, perhaps one thing can be drawn from the case of Celia Ruygrok. Charges have been laid. We do not know who was responsible in terms of the courts and so on, but let us seek to ensure that the security of staff is adequately protected and that we do not have single staffing at night in places where there are many violent offenders. We should try, in a positive way, to put into force the guidelines which have now been drafted by the Canadian Criminal Justice Association, guidelines which would seek to ensure that halfway house programs are working in a positive way in an attempt to try to help offenders establish themselves in the community rather than being dumping grounds for prisoners for a few months or a year or two between the time they are let out of prison on a conditional basis and the time that their term is actually up. Unfortunately, the dumping ground philosophy has been too prevalent. Whether it is a dumping ground in the community or a dumping ground back in prison, which it seems to me is the intent of Bill C-67 and Bill C-68, it is wrong. We have to be positive and treat the whole matter as an integrated criminal justice system, as criminal lawyers said in their testimony on the previous Bill a year or so ago. We cannot fiddle with just one part of the entire system, as is being proposed here, and hope to have positive results.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) is looking further into and meeting with the Solicitor General (Mr. Beatty) on the Kirkpatrick House murder. Frankly I was surprised to hear him and his NDP provincial colleague criticize the John Howard Society so quickly, before getting completely to the bottom of the facts. My own feeling is that there is a lot more to find out about the case. The Hon. Member should not have rushed capturing headlines with his criticism of the way the house was run. Let us get to the bottom of it. I wish he had done that before making a condemnation of the John Howard Society.

The tenor of his remarks was to urge for a more controlled criminal justice system. His colleague, the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson), when he spoke on these Bills the last time they were called as House business, said that the type of additional constraints on mandatory supervision that we wanted to see would lead to more crime. I ask him and his colleague to reflect on that proposition. Does it not really depend on the competence of the National Parole Board? Of course I am urging that we have a competent parole board, but I think these additional constraints which are being imposed upon mandatory supervision will reduce the amount of crime, not increase it. It is exactly the same argument as the one made before the last election when the NDP prevented us from getting this type of legislation at that time. For goodness' sake, we know that we are dealing with tough, hardened offenders, the most difficult risks in the whole system. Let us give the National Parole Board the teeth to keep the ones who are