

Government Orders

society then all society would be informed about dangerous young offenders. This is not the case.

An additional flaw is that violent young offenders' records are not kept on file permanently. The proposals also claim to protect society by allowing police to keep the record of young offenders on file for ten years instead of five. According to the justice department this change will ensure that the length of time a young offender's record is kept is in keeping with the seriousness of the offence. Keeping the young offender's murder record on file for 10 years does not begin to mirror the seriousness of the offence. Murder is permanent; it demands a permanent record. The victims' names and ordeals will be forever etched in the minds of their loved ones long after the murder record has been wiped clean. Society has the right to know. If the government were truly interested in protecting society it would keep all murder records and violent crime records on file permanently.

Bill C-37 also raises some questions about serving sentences in the community. Will the community sentences be adequate? Under the changes set before us today more non-violent offenders will serve their sentences in the community instead of in custody. This change has many attributes. Young offenders will not be influenced by harder violent offenders. Often jail is considered a training ground for crime. It will save government money. It costs approximately \$75,000 to incarcerate an individual. However, the government in saving this money must be committed to redirecting some of it into the communities.

• (1730)

If these offenders are to live in our communities we must ensure that they do not become repeat offenders. We must protect society. To do this, some of these offenders may need treatment and we must ensure that they receive it. I am not talking about spending more money. I am talking about saving money and spending some of it more wisely.

In conclusion, when we make changes to our criminal justice system we must ensure that the system is predictable to society. In order for a judicial system to act as an effective deterrent, citizens must be able to anticipate the outcome of their actions.

It is therefore important that the Young Offenders Act mirror the adult system as accurately as possible. We still have a long way to go, especially in the area of criminal records and publication bans. I believe these changes before us today are a small step toward this goal. Bill C-37 is far from perfect but it will improve the current system somewhat.

Amendments to Bill C-37 are essential. I would urge my fellow members of Parliament to ensure that these are enacted.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, mention has been made of the negative effect of

increasing the sentencing, that this will result in fewer individuals being transferred to adult court.

I remind the member that the onus is reversed. A person such as that is automatically in adult court and must be transferred down to youth court or the young offenders court in the case of serious offences such as murder.

As well there was mention made of the Aylmer incident yesterday but no mention whatsoever was made about the parents. What about those guns? How did they get into the hands? Were they in the hands of law abiding individuals? Were they in the hands of neighbours? How did they get into the hands of the children? Perhaps we should stop blaming the 10-year old and start blaming the adults who allow these guns to get into the hands of young people.

There is a lot of rhetoric about rehabilitation and productivity to society but no substance. Therefore, my question to the hon. member is what would he do? How would he change it? What specific items would he put into the act to deal with rehabilitation and to make this young person productive to society?

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, there are a lot of things we could say that we would change. We could certainly take a look at things like boot camps and those sorts of things. However, more important to the question, we must include victim's impact statements. We must include parents in the actual criminal justice system. The parents have to be forced to be there to hear what the victim went through and what their little darling did to that person. If they are found in any way to be responsible, they have to be part of that restitution; that money that is paid back, that fence that is fixed, whatever that damage has been.

I agree with the member fully. We must involve the parents in this. We must involve the victims in this. I do not see that in Bill C-37. I see a wishy-washy bill that really just satisfies the red book claim that we are going to make some changes but will do nothing to improve the actual situation we have.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Madam Speaker, I would like to rectify what the member said regarding the case in Aylmer. I do not know if he read the same papers as I did, but this young person did not threaten anyone, he was going to practice shooting in a field with some friends. That is no excuse for the parents, though, but it is quite different from what the member said. It is misinformation of that kind that needlessly scares people.

This being said, I know now—I already knew it, but it was confirmed by a member from western Canada—that there is no mechanism in Western Canada to deal with young offenders and their problems.